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EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

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INSTITUTED IN MAY MDCCCXLIII.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE COMMENTARIES ON JEREMIAH, like those on THE MINOR PROPHETS, were delivered as LECTURES IN THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL AT GENEVA, taken down by some of the Pupils, and afterwards read to CALVIN, and corrected. We find in them the production of the same vigorous and expansive mind: The Divine Oracles are faithfully explained, the meaning is clearly stated, and such brief deductions are made as the subjects legitimately warrant. Though the Lectures were extemporaneously delivered, there is yet so much order preserved, and such brevity, clearness, and suitableness of diction are found in them, that in these respects they nearly equal the most finished compositions of CALVIN—a proof that he possessed a mind of no common order.

THE MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH extended over a large space of time—from the thirteenth year of JOSIAH'S reign till after the final overthrow of the nation; but for how long after that period, it is not known.[1] Between the thirteenth year of JOSIAH and the destruction of the city and Temple, there were about *forty* years. This was a remarkable period, and JEREMIAH nearly alone laboured among the people. Their sins had been for the most part the same for a long time—for nearly two centuries, as it appears from the testimonies of his predecessors, AMOS, HOSEA, ISAIAH, JOEL, MICAH, NAHUM, and ZEPHANIAH; for these *seven* had in this order

[1] According to an ancient tradition, mentioned by *Jerome* and others, Jeremiah was stoned to death by the Jews at Tahpanhes in Egypt, (see ch. xliii. 8,) shortly after their removal there, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem. So that he did not live long after that event: it may be two or three years.

preceded him. ZEPHANIAH and HABAKKUK were probably for a time his cotemporaries, the first at the commencement, and the other near the end of his ministry. The contumacy with which JEREMIAH often charged the Jews was here evident, as they continued in their evil courses after so many urgent remonstrances by the former Prophets.

What an example of blindness and of the power of superstition does the history of the Jews at this period exhibit! No past nor present calamities, and no threatenings of still greater calamities, and no promises of Divine favour and of temporal blessings, were sufficient to keep them from idolatrous and immoral practices—and such practices, too, as were plainly and explicitly condemned by that very Law which they professed to receive! Such inconsistency might have been deemed impossible, had it not been exemplified in the Jews: but it is an inconsistency which is still exhibited in the conduct of many calling themselves Christians.

As to THE STYLE OF JEREMIAH, the opinion of the accurate and elegant *Lowth* is as follows:—

"JEREMIAH, though not wanting either in elegance or sublimity, is yet in both inferior to ISAIAH. Jerome seems to charge him with some measure of rusticity as to his expressions; but of this, I truly confess, I have found no traces. In thoughts, indeed, he is somewhat less elevated, being for the most part more loose and diffuse in his sentences, as one more conversant with the more tender feelings, being especially capable of expressing sorrow and sympathy. This, indeed, appears mainly in THE LAMENTATIONS, where these feelings alone predominate; but it is also often found in his Prophecies, and particularly in the first part of his Book, which is chiefly poetical. The middle part is nearly all historical; and the last, consisting of six chapters, is altogether poetical, and contains several oracles plainly expressed, in which the Prophet nearly approaches the sublimity of ISAIAH. But of the whole Book of JEREMIAH, hardly the half do I consider to be poetical."—*Præl.* xxi.

Venema mainly agrees with *Lowth*: he blames *Jerome* for ascribing rusticity of diction to our Prophet, and says

that he was no good judge (*peritus judex*) of such matters. Speaking of JEREMIAH'S style, he says, "His diction is not so lofty and sublime as that of ISAIAH, though in the six last chapters, xlvi.-li., it seems to me to be nearly equal to it, being no less pure, expressive, and copious, besprinkled also with tropes and metaphors as with lights, and fitted to move the feelings and to stimulate the heart to repentance, for which it was designed. The LAMENTATIONS alone are sufficient to defend JEREMIAH against the charge of ignorance and rusticity; for antiquity, as *Sanctius* rightly observes, has nothing more grave, more harmonious, more expressive."—*Com. ad Jer.*, p. 8.

"He is admirably pathetic," says *Scott;* "his descriptions of approaching judgments are peculiarly vivid; and his eloquence is very vigorous and impressive, when inveighing against the shameless audacity of the people in rebellion against God."

Of JEREMIAH as a Prophet, *Henry* mentions these particulars: 1. That he was made a Prophet when young;—2. That he continued long a Prophet;—3. That he was a reproving Prophet;—4. That he was a weeping Prophet;—and, 5. That he was a suffering Prophet, having been persecuted by his own nation more than any other.

There are several references in the New Testament to JEREMIAH and to his writings. See Matt. ii. 17, 18; xvi. 14; Heb. viii. 8-13; x. 15-17. "These last references," observes *Scott*, "are peculiarly important; for in one of them God himself is mentioned as speaking the words referred to; and in the other it is said, 'Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us.' This is decisive, as to the judgment of the inspired Apostles, respecting the Book on which we now enter, and is peculiarly suited to put us on our guard against those professed friends of the Scriptures, who speak of these books as venerable, authentic, or genuine remains of antiquity, of great value and high authority, but hesitate to vindicate them as divinely inspired."—*Pref. to Jer.*

Nothing is with any certainty known as having been written by JEREMIAH, except this Book and the Lamenta-

tions. Ascribed to him has been a funeral song on the death of Josiah, (2 Chron. xxxv. 25,) which, *Josephus* says, was extant in his day. It has been also said by some that he wrote the 137th Psalm, and in connection with EZEKIEL, the 46th Psalm. His Letter to the captives in Babylon in the Apocrypha, appended to the book of Baruch, is no doubt spurious: its style is very different from that of JEREMIAH.

It is universally admitted that the CHAPTERS in this Book are not in their right order. How this has happened, none have been able to conjecture; but the fact is evident. According to *Blayney*, whose account seems correct, the twelve first chapters contain prophecies delivered in the reign of JOSIAH. Those in the thirteenth, and in the following chapters to the twentieth inclusively, were delivered in the reign of JEHOIAKIM. Now begins the disorder; the twenty-first contains what was spoken in the time of ZEDEKIAH, the last king: and afterwards we have what was delivered in a former reign. The kings of Judah, during JEREMIAH'S ministry, were these: —JOSIAH; SHALLUM or JEHOAHAZ, his second son; JEHOIAKIM, his eldest son; JECONIAH, the son of JEHOIAKIM; and ZEDEKIAH, the youngest son of JOSIAH. *Blayney* thinks that no prophecies were delivered in the reigns of SHALLUM and of JECONIAH. Then his classification may be stated as follows: —During the reign of

JOSIAH, were delivered, chapters i.-xii. inclusively.
SHALLUM, none.
JEHOIAKIM, chapters xiii.-xx. inclusively, xxii., xxiii., xxv., xxvi., xxxv., xxxvi., xlv., xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., and xlix. to ver. 33 inclusively.
JECONIAH, none.
ZEDEKIAH, chapters xxi., xxiv., xxvii.-xxxiv., xxxvii.-xxxix., xlix. from ver. 34 to the end, l., and li.

The xl.-xliv. inclusively, were written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people; and the lii., the last, during the same time, or, as it is commonly supposed, by EZRA; it is an epitome of the progressive and final overthrow of the kingdom.

There were several circumstances worthy of notice, with regard to THE JEWS, during the ministry of JEREMIAH :—

I. The *means* which God employed to lead them to repentance, and to a reformation of their conduct, both as to religion and morals: he gave them a pious and a reforming king in JOSIAH; the Book of the Law was providentially discovered and widely made known; a reformation was carried on according to its requirements, while idolatrous practices were in a great measure put an end to; the people had also before their eyes the awful judgment of God on their brethren, THE ISRAELITES, in banishing them from their country; and the powerful preaching of JEREMIAH sounded in their ears.

II. The manifest *evidences* of God's displeasure: their good king, JOSIAH, was suddenly taken from them, no doubt as a judgment for their ingratitude; his successor, SHALLUM, was, after three months' reign, taken prisoner by the Egyptians, and the country was put under tribute; the country was visited with grievous famine, as recorded in chap. xiv.; and JEREMIAH, by GOD'S command, denounced on them the punishment of an entire extinction as a nation.

III. The extremely *corrupted state* of the people: they were both most idolatrous and most immoral, unfaithful to God and to man in a degree hardly credible. During JOSIAH'S reign they pretended to cast away their gross superstitions, but after his death they returned to them, as it were, with increased avidity; and with these superstitions was combined the prostration of every moral principle, and of every natural feeling. Superstition ever destroys morality, and enfeebles all the social and natural sympathies of men. What a picture of the effects of superstition is given by JEREMIAH in chap. ix.!

IV. Notwithstanding this extremely degenerated state of things, THE JEWS harboured the *conviction* that their ruin, as denounced by JEREMIAH, was impossible. While practically denying GOD, they yet rested their confidence on his promises respecting the perpetuity of DAVID'S kingdom, and on their outward privileges; taking as unconditional what was conditional, and regarding the mere possession of divine

institutions as a sufficient security. And in this vain confidence they were encouraged and confirmed by false Prophets and corrupt Priests, in opposition to GOD's messages by his Prophet JEREMIAH, and to the plain declarations of that Law, the authority of which they still ostensibly acknowledged!

These things have been recorded for our instruction.

Some of JEREMIAH'S Prophecies were fulfilled in the days of many of those who heard them; such as those which refer to the Captivity of the people, and to the destruction of the neighbouring nations by the king of Babylon. Other prophecies extend farther, to times more remote, to the destruction of Babylon, to the restoration of the Jews after the term of seventy years, and to the destinies of various nations. There are also Prophecies respecting THE MESSIAH, as The Lord Our Righteousness, The Evangelical Covenant, The Call of the Gentiles, and final Restoration of The Jews. So that there are in this Book some Prophecies which were soon fulfilled, others at a more distant time, and some which are still to be fulfilled. Who but GOD, the Sole and the Supreme Ruler of the world, and the regulator and disposer of all events, could have announced such Prophecies? All those which refer to the past have been fulfilled, fully and completely; and with no less certainty shall all such as refer to what is future be in due time fulfilled. Nothing can intercept the exercise of Divine Faithfulness; nothing can obstruct the working of INFINITE POWER.

Fac-simile copies of the old Latin, French, and English title-pages follow this Preface, with a reprint of the Dedication by CLEMENT COTTON to the COUNTESS OF BEDFORD, prefixed to his English Translation of 1620.

J. O.

THRUSSINGTON, *September* 1850.

IOANNIS

CALVINI

PRÆLECTIONES

IN

LIBRVM PROPHETIARVM JEREMIÆ ET LAMENTATIONES,

¶ *Joannis Budæi & Caroli Jonuillæi labore et induſtria excerptæ.*

Cum duobus indicibus, priore quidem rerum ac ſententiarum maximè inſignem: poſteriore verò locorum qui ex vetere & nouo Teſtamento citantur & explicantur.

¶ *Anchora ſacra mavi iactatos vnica Christus*

Fundat, & est omni tempore sola salus.

GENEVÆ,
APUD HÆRED. EVSTATH. VIGNON.

M. D. LXXXIX.

LEÇONS

OV

COMMENTAIRES ET EXPOSITIONS

DE

IEAN CALVIN

SUR

LES REUELATIONS QUE SUR LES LAMENTATIONS DU

PROPHETE JEREMIE.

Le tout fidellement recueilli, premierement en Latin par Iean Budé, & Charles de Ionuillier: & depuis translaté nouuellement en François.

Auec deux Tables bien vtiles, la premiere des choſes les plus notables contenues en ce liure: l'autre des paſſages alleguez & expoſez, tant du vieil que du nouueau Teſtament.

A LYON.
PAR CLAUDE SENNETON.

M. D. LXV.

TWO AND

TVVENTY LECTVRES

VPON THE FIVE FIRST CHAPTERS OF IEREMIAH.

WITH PRAYERS ANNEXED, AT the end of euery Lecture:

By Maſter IOHN CALVIN.

WHICH BEING FAITHFVLLY COLlected from him as hee vttered them in Latine, in the Schooles of Geneua, were afterwards *tranſlated into French:*

And now newly turned out of French, into Engliſh, *with a Table at the end, containing the ſumme and ſcope of euery Lecture.*

MATTH. 24. 15.
Let him that readeth, conſider it.

AT LONDON,
Imprinted by *Felix Kingſton*, for *Nathanael Newbery*, and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the Star, vnder Saint *Peters* Church in Cornhill, and in Popes head Alley. 1620.

TO THE NOBLE
AND VERTVOVS LADY,
THE LADY LVCIE, COVNTESSE

of Bedford: And to the Right Honourable and highly honoured Lady, the Lady *Anne Harrington*, Barrones: mercy *and peace be multiplied.*

Right Honourable: The holy Prophet *Ieremiah* (according to the diuers subiects he had to worke vpon in his ministeriall function) is forced sometimes, with *Isaiah* his fore-
Isa. 58. 1. runner, to lift vp his voice like vnto a *Sonne of Thunder;* and eftsoones, with the same Prophet againe, to altar and
1 Kings 19. 20. change the same into the still and soft voice of a *Sonne of Consolation:* wherein, as God's faithfull messenger, hee carries himselfe faithfully: For as a *Sonne of Thunder*, he sharply inueyes against the sinnes and sinners of his time, boldly denouncing God's judgements against them; and as a *Sonne of Consolation*, (for their sakes whom the Lord had appointed to bee heires of saluation,) hee sweetly preacheth Christ, mixing often with the terrible threats of the Law the sauing promises of the Gospell; that if any came, by the ministry of the one, to be pricked in conscience and humbled,
Act. 2. 37. he readily, like the good Samaritan, powreth in the mollyfying and healing oyle of the other to cure and reuiue them. And thus, as a wise disposer and dispenser of the manifold
Psalm 101. 1. secrets of God, his song (in a manner) throughout his Pro-
Exod. 28. 33. phesie (like *Aaron's* Bels) soundeth forth iudgement and mercy; preaching iudgement to such as were and would be
Isa. 33. 14. sinners in Sion, and mercy to such as he saw to be mourners
Isa. 61. 3. in Sion. In which respects he may serue as a liuely patterne for all Preachers to follow in their ordinary course of preaching. These Sermons of his (many of them) doe notably sute to our times; and therefore ought to be read, and read againe, of all estates high and low.

But for as much as in reading the Prophets sundry difficulties are met withall, which euery one hath not the skill of himselfe to dissolue, it would (as I thinke) be very beneficiall for such if they had an holy helper, such an one as this, ready at hand: *An interpreter; One* (indeed) *of a thou-* Iob 33. 23.
sand, that might help to dissolue their doubts, and vnloose their hard knots for them; that so vnderstanding what they read, they might (by the blessing of God) with the more ease come to profit by their reading. This hath our *Philip* faith- Act. 8. 34. 35.
fully performed (according to that light of vnderstanding wherewith the Lord had extraordinarily endowed him) throughout the Prophets; and pity it is that so great light should after a sort lie buried in darknesse from many well minded Christians, onely because they are not (as they might be) turned into our owne natiue language.

Not many yeeres since, a Lampe (if I may so speake) began to be kindled, for giuing them some insight into the harder passages of the Prophets, by translating this Author's Commentaries vpon the Prophecie of *Isaiah* into English; but much more cleere would the light haue now shined if thereunto had been added the translation of all his Lectures vpon the Prophesie of *Ieremiah* also. For mine owne part, seeing sufficiency of oyle hath failed me to furnish out this second Lampe vnto the end, I haue for the present proceeded onely through the fiue first Chapters.

The which (Right Honourable) as a testimony of that seruice and duty I owe your Honours, I haue presumed (as one ouertaken with *Ahimaaz* his hast, somwhat abruptly, I confesse) to dedicate vnto you: And if in token of your fauourable acceptance thereof you shall be pleased to suffer the same to passe vnder your Honourable names and patronage, many may be occasioned thereby to blesse God for you, and my selfe still to pray, that the blessing of him who was ready to perish may come vpon you.

Your Honour's humbly
at commandment,

CLEMENT COTTON.

TO THE

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE,

D. FREDERICK,

LORD PALATINE OF THE RHINE, AND ELECTOR OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, ETC.,

AND HIS MOST BENEVOLENT LORD,

JOHN CALVIN

WISHES ALL HAPPINESS.

As your heroic valour, Most Illustrious Prince, has been acknowledged by superior men and competent judges, and especially your singular piety, your labour to cherish and to promote true Religion, and uniform moderation through life; and also your great courtesy, such as can hardly be found in a private individual, and which I have not only known by report, but have also myself experienced,—I have long wished by some public act to testify to posterity the high regard I entertain for you, being not satisfied with having it only in secret. This is well known to the noble-minded EDWARD, the COUNT OF ESPACH, whom I have consulted on the subject.

But to discharge this duty at this time, not only an opportunity seems to be offered to me, but a certain necessity appears to constrain me; for, as you have reverently embraced the sound and orthodox doctrine concerning the Holy Supper of Christ, and have not hesitated freely and wisely to avow the same in your dominion, so turbulent and unreasonable men rage against you, as though you had upset all Germany! Hence they rush headlong to assail your Highness with violent clamours; and as they cannot prevail by authority and power, being full of presumption and insolence, they hesitate not to vomit forth their curses, of which men in their right mind would be ashamed; and not only so, but as it is not in their power to kill you, they fabricate shameful rumours respecting your death, as though a plot of flies were sufficient to darken the sun. And you, indeed, Most Illustrious Prince, according to the magnanimity of your mind, and in accordance with the high dignity in which God has placed you, do altogether disregard their

mad conduct; but as they so busily labour to provoke you, and at the same time bring in my name to create an ill-will to you, I have thought it my duty, in refuting these calumnies, to set up as a shield against them the very name which they wish to make so odious; for certainly they are wholly unworthy that your Highness should raise your little finger against them, or utter the smallest word. Were I indeed disposed to expostulate with them on account of their madness in hating so much a man who has done something for the Church of God, and of whose labours they avail themselves with the unlearned, though they acknowledge it not, they would have no plea for their ingratitude. While, then, they endeavour, by bringing forward CALVINISM, to affix to your Highness some mark of infamy, they do nothing more than betray their own perversity, and also their folly and disgrace. But if they think that they gain something among those who are like themselves, my voice, on the other hand, in speaking of your just praises, will, I hope, be attended to by the godly, the well-informed, and men of calm minds and sound judgment.

Unprincipled men of this character do indeed pretend and loudly exclaim that they fight for God and their country;[1] but whether it be so, it is easy for any one to judge: and I will not indeed discuss at large their delirious notions, as the greater part of them understand not what they vainly talk; I will only touch briefly on the main points in which we differ from their masters, for whom, nevertheless, I have a sincere regard.

That we really feed in the Holy Supper on the flesh and blood of Christ, no otherwise than as bread and wine are the aliments of our bodies, we freely confess. If a clearer explanation is asked, we say, that the substance of Christ's flesh and blood is our spiritual life, and that it is communicated to us under the symbols of bread and wine; for Christ, in instituting the mystery of The Supper, promised nothing falsely, nor mocked us with a vain show, but represented by external signs what he has really given us.

Now the question rests on the mode of communication; and hence the conflict arises, because we refuse to subscribe to their fancy respecting a local presence. We say, that though Christ is in heaven, yet through the hidden and incomprehensible power of his Spirit, this favour comes to us—that His flesh becomes life to us, so that we become flesh of his flesh and bones of his bones.

[1] "Pro aris et focis—for their altars and hearths." The French version is, "for their life and salvation."

(Eph. v. 30.) By them, on the contrary, it is maintained, that except Christ comes down on earth, there is no participation. That they may, however, get rid of the absurdity of a local presence, it has been found necessary to fabricate the strange notion of ubiquity; which, if we think it not possible to reconcile to the principles of faith, we must beg them at least to pardon our ignorance. Here we follow not our own understanding; but according to the knowledge given us from above, we cannot comprehend that it is at all agreeable to Scripture to say that the body of Christ is everywhere. Both Christ himself and His Apostles clearly show that the immensity of God does not belong to the flesh; a personal union is what they teach; and no one, except *Eutyches*, has hitherto taught, that the two natures became so blended, that when Christ became man, the attributes of Deity were communicated to his human nature. I am not indeed disposed to raise an odium against them by means of a man who has been condemned; they are yet to be reminded to think more attentively, and to consider how contention leads astray even good, learned, and acute men, when they are led away only by a desire to defend their own cause. Doubtless the best and the shortest way of confronting *Nestorius* at the Council of Ephesus would have been to say, that personal union communicates to two natures what is peculiar to each: to adduce this no one thought of doing on account of its absolute absurdity. I therefore greatly wonder that they who oppose us do not consider into what labyrinth they plunge themselves.

For if the infinity of God appertains to the flesh of Christ, because God was manifested in the flesh, with equal reason His Divinity may be said to have grieved and to have been thirsty, and to have been subject to death, and, in short, to have died; for they cannot escape, as it is a similar mode of reasoning. Christ, while yet a mortal, declared that He knew not when the day of judgment would be. Does He not in these words clearly and distinctly ascribe something to His human nature which could not justly be ascribed to His Divinity? What they bring forward as to the communication of properties, it is unreasonable, and what I may say without offending them, they mistake in a matter that is very simple and plain; for to ascribe what is peculiar to Deity to the Son of man, and again to attribute to Deity what belongs only to humanity, is very improper and rash. To prevent the ignorant from stumbling by blending together different things, and

to take away from the dishonest any occasion for contending, orthodox writers have called this figure, "The communication of properties."[1]

What they have said of certain expressions, has been with little thought applied to the subject. While Christ was on earth he said that the Son of man was in heaven. That no one, ill-informed, might think Christ's body to be infinite, it has been deemed necessary to meet this case by a plain admonition,—that on account of the unity of person what is suitable only to Divinity has been said of the Son of man. Paul says, as it is recorded by Luke, that God redeemed the Church by His own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) Lest no one may hence conceive that God has blood, the same admonition ought to be sufficient to untie the knot; for as Christ was man and God, what is peculiar to His human nature is ascribed to His Divinity. As it was the Father's design to employ this figure of speech for the purpose of teaching the simple and ignorant, it is absurd and even shameful to apply it for a different purpose, and to say that the communication of properties is the real blending of two natures.

But Christ, it is said, sits at the Father's right hand, which is to be taken as meaning everywhere, confined within no limits. I indeed allow that God's right hand is unlimited, and that wherever it is there is the kingdom of Christ; which is metaphorically represented in Scripture by the term sitting: for whatever is declared of God is beyond controversy to be now ascribed to Christ; and therefore to sit, which means to govern the world, is what Christ has in common with the Father; and still more, as the Father by Him sustains the world, rules all things by His power, and especially manifests the presence of His grace in governing His Church, He may be said, strictly speaking, to reign in His own person. It hence follows, that He in a manner is everywhere; for He can be limited to no place who sustains and protects all parts of heaven and earth, and rules and regulates by His power all things above and below. When now I name Christ, I include the whole Person of the only-begotten Son, as manifested in the flesh. He, I say, God and man, is everywhere as to His authority and incomprehensible power, and infinite glory, according to what the faithful experience by evident effects, as they know and feel His presence. It is not then without reason that Paul declares,

[1] ἰδιμάτων κοινώνιαν, which may be rendered "The communication of peculiarities."—*Ed.*

that He dwells in us. (Eph. iii. 17.) But to distort what is said of His infinite power, which is evident in His spiritual gifts, in the invisible aid which He affords, and in the whole of our salvation, and to apply it to His flesh, is by no means reasonable or consistent.

I wish that many of those who are with little reason angry with us, were at least to recall to mind that common and notable saying used in the Papal Schools, "Christ is whole everywhere, but not altogether."[1] They may repeat it as it is in the barbarous language of *Peter Lombard*, which is not pleasant to their tender and delicate ears. It is yet wisely expressed, from whomsoever it may have come, and I willingly adopt it. But I wonder whence is this daintiness! Seeing the Recantation of *Berengarius* delights *Westphalus* and those who are like him—that Christ's body is broken by the teeth and digested by the stomach—why is this sober distinction to be loathed, that Christ our Mediator is everywhere entire, but not as to His flesh, which is confined within certain limits, while His power is infinite, and its operation felt on earth as well as in heaven?

There are two words commonly used, Union (*unio*) and Unity (*unitas;*) the first is applied to the two Natures, and the second to the Person alone. To assert the unity of the flesh and of Divinity, those would be ashamed to do, if I am not deceived, who yet inconsiderately adopt this absurdity; for, except the flesh differs and is distinct in its own peculiar properties from the Divine nature, they are by blending together become one. They, cavilling, facetiously ask, "In what region of the empyreal heaven does Christ sit?" let them indeed enjoy these fine speculations. I am taught by the Holy Spirit, that He is above all heavens, (Eph. iv. 10:) according to the common mode of speaking in Scripture, I call whatever is beyond the world heaven. Hence it is enough for me, when Christ is to be sought, that our minds are to be raised above, that they may not remain on the earth and be entangled in gross superstitions.

This, then, is the sum and substance of the whole controversy, which the chief leaders of the adverse party too pertinaciously agitate, unless, indeed, we add another subject—that the wicked, as they contend, partake of the flesh and blood of Christ no less than the true servants of God. And we indeed allow that they

[1] "Christus ubique totus est, sed non totum." Lib. 3, Senten. dist. 22.

are equally offered to both; and that whatever may be the difference between men, yet God ever continues like himself the same; and that hence the difference in those who presumptuously thrust themselves does not arise from the nature of the sacrament. When, therefore, Christ gives his body to the unworthy, the difference proceeds from the manner in which it is received. But we deny that those are capable of receiving Christ whom the devil holds as his slaves, and in whom he has his habitation. We do not, however, reject the usual mode of speaking, that Christ is received by them sacramentally, provided absurd interpreters pervert not the words of *Augustine*, in which sacramental eating is said to be the reception of the substance without the grace; but this is a foolish remark, and unknown to *Augustine*. The reason they adduce, as it is weak, may easily be refuted. They say, that Christ came not only for salvation to the elect, but also for condemnation to the reprobate, because the Gospel being not received, but rejected, is the savour of death unto death to those who perish. But who has ever heard that the participation of Christ produces death? But if Christ be the occasion of condemnation to unbelievers because He is rejected by them, I see not how it can be that they procure for themselves condemnation by receiving his flesh. They answer and say, that they are, nevertheless, closed up so as not to admit His grace. But that they may gain credit to what they say, they must first prove their strange notion—that those who are alienated from Christ eat His flesh, while it is to those without life destitute of its own virtue, and empty.

I have now faithfully and plainly explained why they who boast themselves to be the followers of Luther so hastily contend with us at this day. For the same reason they pour forth their execrations on *Philip Melancthon*, now dead, a man who, for his incomparable knowledge in the highest branches of literature, his deep piety, and other endowments, deserves to be remembered by all ages, and whom they have hitherto regarded as their leader: and it is strange, that in order to obtain the favour of the public, they pretend to adopt that noble CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG, of which he was especially the author, and ought to be deemed its true interpreter. I regard them as turbulent and unprincipled men, who possess no common courtesy, and feel no shame.

But there are those who, in this respect, are different, and observe some moderation: and yet I have a just reason to complain, for some of them have acted so unfairly as to give my name

in what they have published in German, and to withhold it in the Latin editions. Now this is to curse the deaf!

But, to omit other things, I revert again to their violent clamours, which are similar to the clamours of those frantic zealots, mentioned by *Josephus*, through whose excesses a cruel war was kindled, which involved Judea in entire ruin. (De Bell. Jud., lib. 14 et 15.) They can find nothing more atrocious by which they can irritate your Highness, Most Illustrious Prince, than the word CALVINISM. But whence this bitter hatred towards me it is not difficult to conjecture. For as they have thought the shortest way to victory to be by suppressing and concealing the real state of the case, and by dazzling the eyes of the simple, it is no wonder that they burn with rage when the clouds of ignorance in which they securely exulted were dissipated; and what especially drives them even to madness, is the fact, that they find that the whole subject is fully and really known by you, so that the doctrine, for which they triumphed while it was unknown, having obtained the patronage of high authority, and being supported by the pious and strong defence of a wise Prince, makes a freer progress.

It would indeed be superfluous to exhort you, who are of yourself sufficiently disposed, to persevere. That you may, however, disregard their impotency, and pursue the object so happily as well as judiciously undertaken, it seems not an useless attempt to confirm you in your course by leaving a pledge of the high regard I entertain for you. And I thought it no act of ingratitude for your incredible courtesy to dedicate to your renowned name my COMMENTARIES ON JEREMIAH. I indeed confess that it has not been elucidated with that care which so excellent a Book deserves; for as I delivered the Lectures from the pulpit, they were taken from my mouth; and I have indeed been before ashamed, that what might have been more accurately revised and polished by a longer meditation has come forth to light. I am also afraid lest the malevolent should accuse me of arrogance, for having obtruded on the public discourses extemporaneous and unwritten, and designed for a small auditory. It is easy to reply to the latter charge, for the first volume was sent to press against my will. That I may not, however, be without excuse, what I have to say is, that I have been led by the judgment of others. I hear of impartial and plain readers, who declare that they have received no small benefit from this kind of labour. And further, some think that a good end may be attained by making known my *extempore* mode of teaching, as

its simplicity may cure many, who are too anxious of display, of that vice. Though learning and aptness to teach cannot satisfy all, I have yet carefully endeavoured that Religion and Faith should not be found wanting by the impartial and well disposed. Nor do I, indeed, fear the charge of arrogance, when I fully avow, that I would have by no means suffered this Book to go forth to the public had I not thought that it would be useful and profitable to the Church of God.

But it may be that some rigid and severe critics will deem it a present unworthy of your Highness; but relying on your rare courtesy, Most Illustrious Prince, I hope it will be favourably accepted. And if JEREMIAH himself were now alive on earth, he would add, if I am not deceived, his recommendation; for he would acknowledge that his PROPHECIES have been explained by me not less honestly than reverently; and further, that they have been usefully accommodated to present circumstances. I feel not, however, over anxious to find an excuse, provided I know that I have done no wrong, except through an excessive desire to testify the veneration with which I regard your Highness.

But, to omit now what I have slightly mentioned at the beginning, I should condemn myself for ingratitude, were I not to consider myself under obligations to you for being so ready and disposed to receive The Christian Exiles who flee to you. It is the saying of a heathen woman, as mentioned by a poet—

"Being acquainted with evil, I learn to aid the miserable."[1]

Let all who worship God and serve Christ be not ashamed, under similar circumstances, to be at least of the same mind. As my power of aiding is not equal to my wish, it becomes me at least to regard every kindness shewn to them as done to myself. Thirty years have passed away since my voluntary exile from FRANCE, because thence were exiled the truth of the Gospel, pure Religion, and the true Worship of God. I am now become so inured to my peregrination, that I feel no desire to return to my country. I am indeed here so far a stranger, (though once banished, I was yet so recalled, that I never feel ashamed,) that they deem me no more a foreigner than if I could name my ancestors as the citizens of this place. But the more kindly God has dealt with me, the greater concern ought I to feel for my brethren from FRANCE as well as from FLANDERS: and as they have been received with the same

[1] Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.

kindness by your Highness, this stimulates and constrains me to avow my gratitude to one so much entitled to it.

Nor let it cause you any regret, Most Illustrious Prince, that you have been sometimes deceived in foreigners, and indeed in men of our language, but go on in your wonted course of benevolence. All know how basely you have been deceived by that most audacious and unprincipled man, at the same time vile, proud, and perfidious—in short, a monster, made up of a mass of filthy materials, even *Francis Baldwin*, and yet a skilful collector of the Civil Law. For having been in THE NETHERLANDS, and having, under the pretext of the Gospel, been received under your patronage, and being made a Professor of the Civil Law through your liberality in THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG, he ought to have considered himself as altogether bound by kindness to so munificent a Prince; but he regarded his elevation as advantageous to him to seek, after his own manner, a new situation. Hence, as soon as hope appeared, he deserted his station, having despised the honourable office which he had fraudulently attained, and passed over to the enemies of true and pure Religion, the name of which he had assumed. And first indeed (as though he retained some portion of shame) he went on stealthily in a clandestine manner, he discussed some secret treacheries with *The Cardinal of Lorraine*, into whose favour he had insinuated himself. The object of the whole was to subvert the CHURCHES OF FRANCE by means of a spurious doctrine and a mixture of ceremonies. But as there appeared no reward for masked and hidden perfidy, he not only rushed headlong into open defection, but so insolently boasted of his wickedness, that he has surpassed similar apostates in canine wantonness. It is however well, that the perfidy of one unprincipled man does not stop the course of your kindness towards others; and you have some recompense for your perseverance, for among the ornaments of your University are to be found some foreigners well known for their high character, whom it is unnecessary for me to name.

Though I can add nothing to the character of your Highness, either by my praise or by the dedication of this Work, yet I could not restrain myself from doing what I thought to be my duty. Farewell, Most Illustrious Prince. May God enrich you more and more with His spiritual gifts, keep you long in safety, and render your dignified station prosperous to you and yours.

GENEVA, *July* 23, 1563.

THE PRINTER TO THE CHRISTIAN READER,

HEALTH.

THOUGH Readers were sufficiently reminded, when the LECTURES of the beloved and learned JOHN CALVIN, on THE MINOR PROPHETS and on DANIEL, were published, by what means and by whom they had been attained, so that it is to no purpose to sing the same song, for so would I seem to do, were I again to explain at large what has been before set forth; it is yet necessary, if I am not mistaken, to add now, that these LECTURES ON JEREMIAH and the LAMENTATIONS were taken down by our two brethren, *John Budeus* and *Charles Jonville*, with the same care, fidelity, and diligence as the former Lectures, which cannot but appear to every one who will attentively read them.

The Hebrew Text has not been inserted; and among other things, for this reason, because it is already possessed by those who understand the language, and to others it would be of no advantage. We were also afraid, that by increasing the Volume and the expense, we should unnecessarily charge the buyer.

But that I may not be prolix and tedious, I pass by the great and manifold benefit that may be derived from this Volume, which will appear to each one better when it is read: for it is so replete with the precious wealth of heavenly Truth, that from it, as from a storehouse, may be drawn the sum and substance of Religion; and so it will no doubt be of great service to the whole Church of God.

It remains for you, Christian Reader, to ascribe to God alone whatever benefit you may derive from these COMMENTARIES; and to pray for CALVIN, who well deserves this from all the godly, until he shall at length enjoy his eternal inheritance. Make use also thankfully of this so valuable a treasure, and judge kindly and impartially of what is cordially presented to you.

GENEVA, *July* 23, 1576.

THE PRAYER

WHICH JOHN CALVIN WAS WONT TO USE AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS LECTURES:

MAY the Lord grant, that we may engage in contemplating the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom with really increasing devotion, to his glory and to our edification.—AMEN.

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THE

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1850.

New English Translations of Calvin's Works.

It is with much satisfaction that THE SECRETARY has now to lay before the Subscribers to the present Series of NEW TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JOHN CALVIN, a brief REPORT of the proceedings of the Society during **the Year 1850**, and of enumerating the Works in progress for the Year 1851, as well as to supply the press with materials for ensuing years.

The Works already circulated, and which are now in the course of distribution, in return for the Subscriptions of the Year 1850 are the following:—

I. COMMENTARIES ON THE PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL. VOL. II. (*Completed.*)

With Notes and Comments by the Editor, viz.:—

1. A complete Synopsis of the contents of Ezekiel's Prophecies.
2. A New Translation of the first Twenty Chapters of Ezekiel, as modified by these Commentaries.
3. A List of the chief Interpreters, ancient and modern.
4. Notice of the Ancient Versions and Codexes, which contain Ezekiel's Prophecies.

5. Sixteen Dissertations on important subjects treated of in these Commentaries.
6. General Index of Words, Phrases, and Things.
7. Index of Passages of Scripture quoted or explained.
8. List of Sacred and Profane Authors quoted by Calvin, with references.
9. List of Hebrew Words explained.

II. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH. VOL. I.

With the Translator's Prefatory Notice; *Fac-simile* of Title-page of the old English Translation by Clement Cotton, London, 1609, and of his Dedication to Henry, Prince of Wales, and to his sister, the Princess Elizabeth; and Dr. Hering's Epigram. These are followed by Calvin's Dedication of his *second* edition to Queen Elizabeth, and of his *first* edition to King Edward VI.; and Calvin's Preface to the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

III. COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS. VOL. II. (*Completed.*)

With Index of the Hebrew Words explained; Index of Passages of Scripture quoted or referred to; and a very copious General Index.

IV. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH, AND THE LAMENTATIONS. VOL. I.

With Translator's Preface; *Fac-simile* of the old Latin, French, and English editions; Dedication by Clement Cotton to the Countess of Bedford; Calvin's Dedication to Frederick, Lord Palatine of the Rhine, &c.; and an Epistle from the Printer to the Reader.

These Volumes form the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Issues.

The above-mentioned Volumes have already been transmitted through the usual channels, to every Member whose Subscriptions have hitherto reached THE OFFICE, 9, Northumberland Street, Edinburgh. Parties whose friends or correspondents have omitted to remit their ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS and ARREARS, will be so good as instruct them to do so *without delay*, by Post-Office or Bank Orders, or Cheques, payable to the Secretary, and their parcels will imme-

diately be sent *free of carriage* to any address in London, Dublin, or Edinburgh; or, they will be booked at Railway Offices or other Public Conveyances, to be forwarded from thence at their own risk and expense to their respective destinations.

To facilitate the prompt and accurate delivery of future parcels, Subscribers are particularly requested to send timely notice to the Office of the Secretary, of all the changes of Residence and Address, or of any alterations in the present mode of conveyance.

THE WORKS which are in preparation for THE YEAR 1851, in return for the Annual Subscription payable on *the First day of January* 1851, and which form the *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Issues*, are as follows:—

1. COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLES TO THE PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, AND THESSALONIANS. (*Completed.*)
2. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH. VOL. II.
3. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH. VOL. II.
4. COMMENTARY ON THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL. VOL. I.

The subsequent portions of these Commentaries are also proceeding in a very satisfactory manner. Besides the continuation of the above noted Works, THE HARMONY OF THE PENTATEUCH, THE COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLES TO THE GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS, and on THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, are likewise in progress, with further portions of CALVIN'S valuable TRACTS.

With all these preparations, and through the industry, zeal, and activity of our Translators and Editors, it is trusted that earlier Issues of the Books may be counted on for the future; provided only, that all the Members as zealously co-operate in supporting this very important Scheme with their individual countenance and

aid, by augmenting to the utmost of their power the number of Subscribers, and otherwise helping the Secretary to carry out the valuable and interesting objects of this Society.

The necessity of making prompt and punctual payment of the Annual Contributions is again most earnestly impressed on the Subscribers, so as to enable the Secretary to arrange the various materials, to put the Works to press at an earlier date than heretofore, and to regulate the number of copies to be printed. If the Members were uniformly to transmit their Annual payments **direct** to THE OFFICE, in EDINBURGH, in January or February of each year, all the other arrangements would be greatly facilitated.

It is very encouraging to find, that each succeeding year these NEW TRANSLATIONS are received by our Members with more and more favourable acceptance, consisting as they do of every denomination of Evangelical Christians, lay as well as clerical. From the numerous communications with which the Secretary has been favoured, it is clear that at length THE WRITINGS OF JOHN CALVIN begin to be better known, and consequently to be more widely appreciated, throughout the Christian world. These Works are now regularly transmitted to numerous Clergy, Missionaries, and laymen, in nearly all our Colonies and dependencies, including the EAST AND WEST INDIES, NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, CHINA, &c.; and it is truly gratifying to announce that the number of regular Subscribers in THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, and THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, are gradually and steadily increasing.

It may with truth be said, that a *fuller* and *plainer* explanation of SCRIPTURE is nowhere to be found than in THE COMMENTARIES OF CALVIN. The Critical is so blended with the Exegetical, that the learned and the unlearned may both be edified; and the Critical is not commonly too dry or abstruse for the plain reader, while the Explanatory part is instructive to the scholar. The reason of this is evident. Both the Criticisms and the Explanations are such

as are suitable to the Scripture itself, which has been written according to the common ideas of mankind, and in condescension to the common capacities of men. He who understands what man generally is, and regards his ordinary mode of thinking and of expressing himself, is the fittest to explain the Scriptures, and not he who soars into the regions of grammatical and logical refinements. The Word of God has been written for the community—for the people in general—and not specifically for the learned. The refinements of the learned, who have too frequently lost sight of common sense in studying logic and grammar, have done much in every age—and perhaps more than anything else—to obscure and pervert the Word of God. Indeed, the greatest perversions of Scripture have ever proceeded from those who had the reputation of being "learned"—the subtle logicians, and the proud philosophers.

We conceive, also, that CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES are especially suited to the exigencies of the present day. The age is eminently the age of Translations. Never has Scripture been before translated into so many languages—and the work is going on still! Our Missionaries are continually extending the spread of "The best of Books," by converting it into new languages; so that the gift of tongues—for a season miraculously vouchsafed to the primitive Christians—is still perpetuated, but in a way more calculated to be permanently useful. Different nations not only can now hear "the wonderful works of God," but can also read them in their own native language.

There are no COMMENTARIES, so far as known to us, which can afford so much assistance to those who are engaged in studying critically—and especially in translating—The Holy Scriptures, as those of CALVIN; and that, not only on account of his own criticisms and explanations, but also on account of the Critical Notes and Illustrations which are added by our Editors, selected as these are from the Works of the best Biblical Scholars since the time of Calvin.

The careful, accurate, and scholarlike manner in which our Translators have discharged their arduous duties, has been noticed in the most gratifying way, not only by our own Members, but by the Evangelical Reviews and Magazines, and the Periodical Press of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as those of the United States of America. Individuals, likewise, though not regular Subscribers, but who highly prize the Writings of CALVIN, and desire to encourage their wider dissemination, have in the strongest way drawn the attention of the sounder branches of the Church of Christ to the advantage and importance of giving the fullest measure of support to the efforts of this Society, and have likewise impressed upon all who have the means, the advisableness and utility of becoming Members, and otherwise encouraging this Scheme. If, however, parties cannot individually afford to procure the whole Series at one time, they have been recommended to unite with others in providing Parish and Congregational Libraries, Reading Clubs, and Public Institutions, with sets of the works, and presenting the Books to Ministers and Students of Divinity.

Re-Issue of New Translations of Calvin's Works.

In compliance with the suggestions which have been made from time to time, it has been resolved to make a RE-ISSUE OF THE WHOLE OF CALVIN'S WORKS, so far as they have been hitherto completed, to enable NEW SUBSCRIBERS to join the Society, and procure the Books either together or periodically, as shall be most convenient for them; and further, to enable the Clergy, Students of Divinity, and others, to select SEPARATE COMMENTARIES or PORTIONS of these Translations.

For the particulars of this Re-Issue, reference is made to the Circular annexed to the present Report. Subscribers and their friends who are desirous of assisting in this proposal, will be supplied with copies for circulation on applying at the Secretary's Office, or packets will be sent to the addresses which shall be forwarded for that purpose.

RECEIPTS FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, will be ready at THE OFFICE in Edinburgh previous to the close of each year, so as to be transmitted *in course of post* to Subscribers, or their correspondents or Agents sending the remittances, which, for the sake of greater security, are requested to be *uniformly* made by Post-Office Orders, Bank Bills, or Cheques, payable to the Secretary,

ROBERT PITCAIRN,
Acting and Editorial Secretary.

CALVIN OFFICE,
9, NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,
2d December 1850.

RE-ISSUE OF CALVIN'S WORKS.

NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

THE WHOLE SERIES, SO FAR AS PUBLISHED, MAY BE HAD **immediately, on remittance by Orders payable to the Secretary**; OR THE ISSUES WILL BE DELIVERED MONTHLY, QUARTERLY, OR YEARLY, AS SHALL BE MOST CONVENIENT TO INTENDING SUBSCRIBERS.

Calvin Translation Society,

INSTITUTED MAY 1843.

Patrons.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.	THE DUKE OF MANCHESTER.
THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.	THE LORD BISHOP OF CASHEL, &c.
THE LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.	THE BISHOP OF GEORGIA, U.S.
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Robert Pitcairn, F.S.A.Scot., Secretary. Office, 9 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.

"THE VENERABLE CALVIN.—I hold the memory of CALVIN in high veneration; his Works have a place in my library; and in the study of the Holy Scriptures he is one of the Commentators I most frequently consult."—BISHOP HORSLEY.

"CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES remain, after three centuries, unparalleled for force of mind, justness of expression, and practical views of Christianity."—BISHOP OF CALCUTTA, (*Wilson.*)

"THE Genevese Reformer (CALVIN) surpassed KNOX in the extent of his theological learning, and in the unrivalled solidity and clearness of his judgment."—M'CRIE, *Life of Knox.*

"A Minister without this, is without one of the best Commentaries on THE SCRIPTURES, and a valuable body of Divinity."—BICKERSTETH, *Christian Student.*

Four Large Octavo Volumes Yearly to Subscribers, for One Pound.

AMONGST the Theological Works which were widely circulated in England and Scotland during the latter part of the Sixteenth Century, Translations of many of the Writings of JOHN CALVIN had a distinguished place. Of his eminence as a DIVINE and COMMENTATOR ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, it is unnecessary here to speak, though few are now fully aware of the very high respect in which his Works were held by all the leading English Reformers and Ecclesiastical Writers, from Cranmer to Hooker, and the extensive benefits resulting to the Church of Christ from his literary labours. At that time, doctrines which he never held were not attributed to him; nor were sentiments imputed to him which he never advocated. Bishop Horsley well advised, to ascertain what is Calvinism and what is not.

It has now been resolved not to reprint any of *the old Translations*, but to have accurate and faithful NEW TRANSLATIONS prepared for the present undertaking. There can be no doubt that this important SERIES OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION will be acceptable and useful at the present period—to all who value true Scriptural Doctrines—who thoroughly approve the principles of the Protestant Faith—and who duly appreciate these valuable Writings; but especially are they needful to all who are engaged in the study of Divinity and in the exposition of THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

It is proposed to print NEW TRANSLATIONS of all CALVIN'S COMMENTS ON SCRIPTURE, his SERMONS, his INSTITUTES and THEOLOGICAL WORKS, and, if practicable, his CORRESPONDENCE and MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS, so as to present A COMPLETE COLLECTION OF HIS WORKS. *Four volumes* (each containing on an average 500 pages) will be delivered to every Subscriber, for each Annual Subscription of One Pound, *paid in advance* on 1st January yearly. Copious Tables and Indices are appended to each of the Commentaries, &c., to facilitate reference, and to render the whole Series more generally useful and acceptable to every class of readers. To secure the efficient working of this plan, the impression is limited to 3000 copies, uniform with the Publications of THE PARKER and WODROW SOCIETIES.

For the above mentioned Annual Subscription of One Pound, it is considered that in a few years the most important of the Translations may be given. Each work will be independent of the rest, but the whole will be uniform in size and type, as far as the extent of the respective Works will permit.

Managers of Public, Parochial, and Congregational or Vestry Libraries, and Reading Clubs, are respectfully invited to consider the advantage of subscribing to these Translations. Parties wishing to make presents to Parish Libraries, Ministers, Students of Divinity, or private friends, would also find that these Works could not fail to be a very useful and acceptable gift.

Subscription [£1] payable in advance, on 1st January.

☞ **NEW SUBSCRIBERS** *may still be admitted*, on the original terms, *and obtain all the Works, on transmitting their Subscriptions, by Post Office or Bank Orders, payable to the Secretary; or parties may take* one or more years' Books at a time, *and pay up the remainder of the Subscriptions at convenient intervals.*

Members, and all who are friendly to THE CALVIN TRANSLATIONS' SCHEME, *are particularly requested to co-operate in increasing the number of Subscribers, and circulating these invaluable Works still more widely.*

Books delivered free in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh.

OFFICE OF THE CALVIN SOCIETY, 9, NORTHUMBERLAND ST., EDINBURGH.

ROBERT PITCAIRN, F.S.A.SCOT. *Secretary.*

WORKS OF THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY.—RE-ISSUE.

TO COMMENCE ON 1st NOVEMBER 1850.

WORKS ALREADY COMPLETED.

FIRST YEAR, (1843.)

COMMENTARY ON THE ROMANS, (*completed,*) . . . . . } *First Issue.*
TRACTS ON THE REFORMATION. Vol. I., ... }
COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. Vols. I. & II. } *Second Issue.*
(*completed,*) . . . . . }

*** Three of the above volumes being Old Translations, these books do not form a part of the present Re-issue. It is optional, however, for parties to have them at the original subscription price, or separate volumes at 7*s.* 6*d.* each.

LIST OF THE RE-ISSUE OF WORKS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

SECOND YEAR, (1844.)

INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION Vol. I., . . . } *Third Issue.*
HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS. Vol. I., ... }
INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Vol. II., . . . } *Fourth Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS. Vol. I., ... }

THIRD YEAR, (1845.)

HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS. Vols. II. & I. (*completed,*) . — *Fifth Issue.*
INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Vol. III. (*completed,*) } *Sixth Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS. Vol. I., . . . }

FOURTH YEAR, (1846.)

COMMENTARY ON THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS. Vols. I. & II., — *Seventh Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN. Vol. I., . . . } *Eighth Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS. Vol. III., . . . }

FIFTH YEAR, (1847.)

COMMENTARY ON THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS. Vol. III., . } *Ninth Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS. Vol. I., ... }
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS. Vol. IV., ... } *Tenth Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON JOHN'S GOSPEL. Vol. II. (*completed,*) . . . }

SIXTH YEAR, (1848.)

COMMENTARY ON THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS. Vol. V. . } *Eleventh Issue.*
COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS. Vol. I., . }
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CALVIN'S PREFACE

TO THE BOOK OF

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

Lecture First.

AFTER having explained THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS, we reached at length to the end of DANIEL. I now undertake to explain THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH, provided life be spared and leisure be given me. But if through God's grace time will be allowed, there will remain still one Prophet, that is, EZEKIEL; which I hope will be undertaken by a more competent Interpreter.

AS to JEREMIAH, it must be first observed, that he commenced his office as a Prophet under JOSIAH, and in the thirteenth year of his reign, who was a sincere servant of God, and yet the state of things was then very confused: the Book of the Law was unknown; so that every one indulged his fancy in inventing many impious forms of worship. No doubt at a time when such liberty prevailed, there were many turbulent men labouring to pervert the worship of God and pure doctrine, and fabricating for themselves many absurd things. For if the priests taught rightly, they must have derived all their knowledge from the Law: and though it is probable, that the memory of it was not wholly lost, yet a few fragments only remained, so that they could not with certainty learn how the Church was to be regulated according to what had been received from above. For it is related in sacred history, that the Book was found in the

eighteenth year of JOSIAH, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8, 15;) so that JEREMIAH had been then teaching for four, and even for five years.

Now this fact clearly proves how great is the carelessness and sloth of men in the great concerns of Religion. God had commanded Moses, that a copy of the Law should not only be kept reverently and carefully in the Temple, but also by the kings themselves, (Deut. xvii. 18;) and there was also added a command, that the whole Law should be read to the people at their festivals. (Deut. xxxi. 11.) But when the kings departed from the true worship of God, no copy of the Law was preserved by them: and at length the whole Law became as it were extinct. No doubt this happened through the tyranny of King MANASSE, who cruelly raged against the priests and against all the other servants of God. Wherever only a spark of religion appeared, he was intent on slaughter; so that blood, as sacred history testifies, flowed through all the streets of Jerusalem. (2 Kings xxi. 16.) It was then no wonder, if he took away from the Temple all the copies of the Law found there, in order to extinguish all memory of true doctrine. However, a book, which had been hid, was found, as we are told, by the priest HILKIAH.

The first thing then to be observed is the time when he began to teach: as religion was then so corrupted, and every one invented errors to suit his own humour, the office of JEREMIAH must have been hard and arduous.

Secondly, the termination of his ministry must be noticed. He says, that from that time he pursued his office until the transmigration. He therefore continued in his course for forty years. We shall hereafter see what hard contests he had to undergo during his life. But had the people been teachable, he could not have performed what God had commanded him without great pain and even weariness: for we shall presently see what was the doctrine which he was commanded to proclaim. As then he was assiduous in his labour for forty years, we hence perceive with what a courageous spirit he was endued. If we further consider what storms had been raised, calculated to cast him down from his high station, and even wholly to drive him from the right way,

more clearly still will shine forth the invincible firmness of his mind and his zeal; for he never desisted from executing the office committed to him.

We must further observe, that after the city was cut off, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were led captives into Babylon, Jeremiah still continued to discharge his office. He was indeed drawn into Egypt, as we learn from the end of his Book, especially from chap. xliv.; nay, he was taken there by force, while yet he pronounced a curse on all the Jews who sought hiding-places in Egypt. Though he was forced to go there, yet it much lessened his authority; for we know that ungodly men lay hold on any pretence for evil-speaking. There was here a specious pretence; "He cursed," they said, "all who went to Egypt, and now where does he dwell himself? In Egypt with the other refugees." No doubt the faith of the holy man was shaken by these banterings: ungodliness has been wanton in all ages. There, then, after the destruction of the city, Jeremiah was constrained to bend his course: and it may be, that he persevered in his work and labour beyond fifty years. It is said, that he was stoned to death, and not unlikely, for he inveighed with no less severity against the Jews who had fled into Egypt, than against the city while it was standing; and despair might have roused them into madness. It is hence probable that they slew the holy Prophet, and thought this lawful because he upbraided them with their miseries, while his object was to correct their perverseness, which was untameable; and this they did not consider.

I come now to THE CONTENTS of the Book. As ISAIAH and the other Prophets spent their labour almost in vain, nothing remained for JEREMIAH but briefly to announce this sentence,—"There is now no pardon, but it is the time of extreme vengeance, for they have too long abused God's forbearance, who has borne with them, kindly and even sweetly exhorted them to repent, and testified that he would be exorable and propitious, provided they returned to the right way." Since then God's kindness had been despised by them, it became necessary for Jeremiah to fulminate against

them as men lost and in a hopeless state of perverseness. The main thing then in his teaching was this:—"It is all over with the kingdom and the priesthood; for the Jews have so often and in such various ways, and for so long a time, provoked God's wrath and rejected the pious warnings of his servants."

ISAIAH also in his time used threatenings; but we see that to mitigate what was terrible, some hope of pardon was added whenever he spoke with severity. But after the ten tribes had been carried into exile, and the kingdom had been visited with various calamities, while the Jews still continued impenitent, and even hardened themselves more and more under God's scourges, it was necessary, as I have said, that he should deal more sharply with them. God had contended with them by ISAIAH and the other prophets; by JEREMIAH and also by EZEKIEL he proved them guilty, and denounced on them the sentence of condemnation. This difference between the teaching of ISAIAH and that of our Prophet, ought to be noticed.[1]

At the same time, that JEREMIAH's teaching might not be imperfect, it was God's purpose that he should be also the herald of his grace and of the salvation promised in Christ. This exception, however, ought to be borne in mind, that he offered them no hope of mercy until they had suffered the punishment due to their sins.

We now then understand what JEREMIAH mainly taught: but particulars will be better and more distinctly understood by readers by following the course of the text. And I do not now treat in general of what is to be found in the prophets; for this is what I have done elsewhere. I now then say only, that JEREMIAH was sent by God to proclaim to the people their last calamity; and also to speak to them of their future redemption, and at the same time, ever to remind them of the interposition of seventy years in exile. I come now to the words.

[1] *Scott* says that Jeremiah "entered upon the prophetic office almost *seventy* years after the death of Isaiah."—*Ed.*

CHAPTER I.

1. The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that *were* in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin:

2. To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

3. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

1. Verba Jeremiæ filii Helkiæ, ex sacerdotibus qui erant in Anathoth, in terra Benjamin,

2. Nempe (אשר *explicative hic ponitur*) fecit sermo Jehovæ ad ipsum, in diebus Josiæ, filii Amon, regis Jehudah, decimo tertio anno regni ejus;

3. Et fuit (*hoc est, perrexit in cursu vocationis suæ*) diebus Joakim, filii Josiæ, regis Jehudah, usque ad complementum undecimi anni Zedechiæ, filii Josiæ, regis Jehudah, ad transmigrationem Jerusalem, mense quinto.

I HAVE said that the time, when JEREMIAH began to discharge his office of a Prophet in God's Church, is not stated here without reason, and that it was when the state of the people was extremely corrupt, the whole of Religion having become vitiated, because the Book of the Law was lost: for nowhere else can be found the rule according to which God is to be worshipped; nor can right knowledge be obtained from any other source. It was then, at the time when impiety had by a long custom prevailed among the Jews, that Jeremiah suddenly came forth. There was then laid on his shoulders the heaviest burden; for many enemies must have risen to oppose him, when he attempted to bring back the people to the pure doctrine of the law, which the greater part were then treading under their feet.

He calls himself the *son of Hilkiah*. The Rabbins think that this Hilkiah was the priest by whom the Book of Moses was found five years after: but this seems not to me probable. The conjecture also of *Jerome* is very frivolous, who concludes that the Prophet was a boy when he began to prophesy, because he calls himself נער, (*nor,*) a child, a little farther on, as though he did not use the word metaphorically.[1] At what age he was called to the prophetic office,

[1] The word does not properly mean a "child," as in our version, or "puer," as rendered by *Calvin*, but a youth, or rather a young man. Abraham's "trained servants" were thus called, Gen. xiv. 24, and his ser-

we do not know; it is, however, probable that he was of mature age, for it was a work of high authority; and further, had he been a youth, doubtless such a miracle would not have been passed over in silence, that is, that he was made a prophet before the age of maturity.

With regard to his father, it is nothing strange that the Rabbins have regarded him as the high priest; for we know that they are always prone to vain boastings. Ambition possessed them, and hence they have said that Jeremiah was the son of the high priest, in order to add to the splendour of his character. But what does the Prophet himself say? He declares indeed that he was the son of Hilkiah, but does not say that this was the high priest; on the contrary he adds, that he was *from the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.* Now we know that this was a mean village, not far from Jerusalem; and Jeremiah says, that it was in the tribe of Benjamin. Its nearness to Jerusalem may be gathered from the words of Isaiah, who says that small Anathoth was terrified. (Is. x. 30.) He threatened Jerusalem by saying that the enemy was near. "What," he says, "is your security? Ye can hear the noise of your enemies and the groans of your brethren from your very gates; for Anathoth is not far from you, being only three miles distant." Since then Jeremiah only says, that he came from Anathoth, why should we suppose him to be the son of the high priest? And frivolous is what the Chaldee paraphraser adds here,—that Hilkiah had possessions in the town of Anathoth, as though it was allowed the priests

vant who dressed the calf for the angels, Gen. xviii. 7, and his "young men" who accompanied him to Mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 5. Joshua had this name given him, when he was attending Moses at the tabernacle, Ex. xxxiii. 11. It is rendered "νεανίσκος—a youth or a young man," by the *Septuagint.* The most probable thing is, that he was, not as *Adam Clarke* supposes, about 14, but a young man verging on maturity. The length of time during which he prophesied, would lead us to conclude that he was young when he was appointed to his office.

There are two remarkable resemblances between Jeremiah and Moses. They both made an excuse for declining the office to which God called them, and made a similar excuse. The other resemblance is what *Lightfoot* has noticed,—that Moses was a teacher of the people for *forty years* before they entered the land of Canaan, and that Jeremiah was their teacher for *forty years* before they were banished from it and driven into exile.—*Ed.*

to possess land: God allowed them only what was necessary to feed their flocks. We may then take it as certain, and what the Prophet indeed expressly declares, that he came from the village of Anathoth.[1]

He further says, that he was of the *priestly* order. Hence the prophetic office was more suitable to him than to many of the other prophets, such as Amos and Isaiah. God took Isaiah from the court, as he was of the royal family, and made him a prophet. Amos was in a different situation: he was taken from the shepherds, for he was a shepherd. Since God appointed such prophets over his Church, he no doubt thus intended to cast a reflection on the idleness and sloth of the priests. For, though all the priests were not prophets, yet they ought to have been taken from that order; for the priestly order was as it were the nursery of the prophets. But when gross want of knowledge and ignorance prevailed among them, God chose his prophets from the other tribes, and thus exposed and condemned the priests. They ought, indeed, to have been the messengers of the God of hosts, so as to keep the law in their lips, that the people might seek it from their mouth, according to what is said by Malachi. (Mal. ii. 7.) But as they were dumb dogs, God transferred the honour of the prophetic office to others; but Jeremiah, as I have already stated, was a prophet as well as a priest.

He begins in the second verse to speak of his calling.[2] It

[1] The reasons alleged against Jeremiah being the son of the high priest are by no means conclusive: indeed, all the circumstances being considered, the probability is in favour of that supposition. The family of the high priest resided no doubt at Anathoth; what is said in 1 Kings ii. 26, respecting Abiathar, is a proof of this. That the high priest resided at Jerusalem during the term of his office forms no objection; nor is the genealogy of the high priests as given in 1 Chron. vi. 1-17, any objection; for though in verse 13, Azariah is said to be the son of Hilkiah, yet Jeremiah might have been one of his younger sons. Most commentators agree indeed with *Calvin*,—*Gataker*, *Henry*, *Scott*, *Blayney*, &c.; but they adduce no satisfactory reasons, sufficient to invalidate the opinion of the Rabbins and the intimation contained in the *Targum:* and this opinion is what the translators of the Geneva Bible have adopted.—*Ed.*

[2] The second verse begins with אֲשֶׁר, which *Calvin* renders "nempe—even," and takes it in an exegetic sense: but this is not its meaning. Our version is no doubt correct, "to whom;" though there is no preposition before it, it is yet found before the personal pronoun "to him," that comes

would have, indeed, been to little purpose, had he said that he came forth and brought a message; but he explains, in the second verse, that he brought nothing but what had been delivered to him by God, as though he had said, that he faithfully declared what God had commanded him. For we know that the whole authority belongs entirely to God, with regard to the doctrine of religion, and that it is not in the power of men to blend this or that, and to make the faithful subject to themselves. As God, then, is the only true teacher of the Church, whosoever demands to be heard, must prove that he is God's minister. This is, then, what Jeremiah is now carefully doing, for he says that the *word of Jehovah* was given to him.

He had before said, *the words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah;* but any one of the people might have objected and said, "Why dost thou intrude thyself, as though any one is to be heard? for God claims this right to himself alone." Hence Jeremiah, by way of correction, subjoins, that the words were his, but that he was not the author of them, but the minister only. He says, then, that he only executed what God had commanded, for he had been the disciple of God himself before he undertook the office of a teacher.

As to the beginning of his time and its termination, it has been briefly shewn, why he says that he had been chosen a prophet *in the thirteenth year of Josiah*, and that he discharged his office till *the eleventh year of Zedekiah*.

Now that *Josiah is called the son of Amon*, it is doubtful whether Josiah was properly his son. Amon began to reign in his twenty-second year, and reigned only two years. Josiah succeeded him in the eighth year of his age. If we

afterwards. It is an idiom of the language, and the very same exists in *Welsh*, in which the version is literally the same with the Hebrew—a relative pronoun without a preposition followed by a personal pronoun with a preposition prefixed to it. It would be literally in English, "whom the word of Jehovah came to him." The Welsh also retains the peculiarity of the Hebrew, in having prepositions prefixed to pronouns and attached to them, though this is not the case generally with nouns,—

Yr hwn y daeth gair Jehova atto.

The verb too, as in the Hebrew, precedes its nominative; "came" is before "the word of Jehovah." It is rather singular that the *Septuagint* have rendered this relative by "ὡς—as," which shows that the Hebrew idiom was not understood by them.—*Ed.*

number the years precisely, Josiah must have been born when Amon was in his sixteenth year; but it does not appear likely, that Amon was a father when he was sixteen years of age, for in this case he must have begotten a son in his fifteenth year; as the birth must have taken place nine months after. Then Josiah must have been begotten in the fifteenth year of Amon's age. It is hence a probable conclusion, that he was a son by law and not by nature, according to what is afterwards said of Zedekiah, that he was Josiah's son, because he was his successor, while he was, as many think, his nephew, a brother's son. But it was a common thing to call the successors of kings their sons, who were their sons by law, and not, as I have said, by nature. It now follows—

4. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
5. Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

4. Et fuit sermo Jehova ad me dicendo,
5. Antequam formarem te in utero novi te, et antequam egressus esses è vulvâ sanctificavi te, Prophetam in gentibus constitui te.

Here Jeremiah explains more fully what he had already mentioned—that he had been called from above, for otherwise he would have presumptuously obtruded himself: for no one, as the Apostle says, takes this honour to himself; but the call of God alone raises up prophets and teachers to their dignity. Hence, that Jeremiah might secure attention, he declares that he had been called to the prophetic office, and that by the clear voice of God. For this purpose, he says, that this *word* was given him, *Before I formed thee in the womb*[1] *I knew thee.* He introduces God as the speaker, that what he declares might be more emphatical, that it might be of more weight and more forcible: for, if he had said simply in his own person, that he had been made a prophet by God's voice, it would not have so much moved the hearers; but when he brings forward God as the speaker, there is necessarily more weight and force in what is said.

I pass by here what might be more largely said on what

[1] More strictly, "in the inside," or belly, בטן. The specific term for womb is in the next sentence, רחם.—*Ed.*

is necessary in one's call, so that he may be attended to by God's people; for no one, by his own and private right, can claim this privilege of speaking, as I have already said, inasmuch as this is what belongs to God alone. But I have elsewhere spoken at large on the prophetic call; it is therefore enough now to point at such things as these as it were by the finger: and particular discussions must be sought elsewhere; for were I to dwell at large on every subject, my work would be endless. I will, therefore, according to my usual practice, give a brief exposition of this Prophet.

Jeremiah then says, that he had been *called by God*, for this end,—that he might on this account gain a hearing from the people. God declares that he *knew* Jeremiah before he *formed* him *in the womb*. This is not said specially of the Prophet, as though other men are unknown to God, but it is to be understood of the prophetic office, as though he had said, "Before I formed thee in the womb, I destined thee for this work, even that thou mayest undertake the burden of a teacher among the people." And the second part is a repetition, when he says, *Before thou camest forth from the womb I sanctified thee.* Sanctification is the same as the knowledge of God: and thus we perceive that knowledge is not mere prescience, but that predestination, by which God chooses every single individual according to his own will, and at the same time appoints and also sanctifies him; for no one, as Paul declares, (2 Cor. ii. 16,) is according to his own nature fitted for the work. Since then this fitness is the gratuitous gift of God, it is nothing strange that God declares that he had *sanctified* Jeremiah, as though he had said, "I formed thee man in the womb, and at the same time appointed thee for this particular work; and as it was not in thy power to bring with thee a qualification for the prophetic office, I formed thee not only a man, but a prophet." This is the import of the passage.

But they refine too much, who think that the Prophet was sanctified from the womb as John the Baptist was, for the words mean no such thing; but only that is testified of Jeremiah, which Paul also affirms respecting himself in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians,—that he was known

by God before he was born. Jeremiah then was not actually sanctified in the womb, but set apart according to God's predestination and hidden purpose; that is, God chose him then to be a Prophet. It may be asked, whether he was not chosen before the creation of the world? To this it may be readily answered,—that he was indeed foreknown by God before the world was made; but Scripture accommodates itself to the measure of our capacities, when it speaks of the generation of any one: it is then the same as though God had said of Jeremiah,—that he was formed man for this end—that in due time he might come forth a Prophet.

And no doubt the following clause is added exegetically, *A prophet for the nations I made thee.* His sanctification, then, as I have said, was not real, but intimated that he was appointed a Prophet before he was born.

It however seems strange that he was given a Prophet *to the nations.* God designed him to be the minister of his Church; for he neither went to the Ninevites, as Jonah did, (Jonah iii. 3,) nor travelled into other countries, but spent his labours only among the tribe of Judah; why then is it said that he was given as a Prophet *to the nations?* To this I answer,—that though God appointed him especially for his Church, yet his teaching belonged to other nations, as we shall presently see, and very evidently, as we proceed; for he prophesied concerning the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and the Moabites; in short, he included all the nations who were nigh and known to the Jews. This was indeed as it were accidental: but though he was given as a Prophet especially to his own people, yet his authority extended to heathen nations. No doubt *nations* are mentioned, including many, in order that the power and dignity of his teaching might appear more evident. It follows—

6. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I *am* a child.

7. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

6. Et dixi, Ahah, Domine Jehova, ecce non novi loqui, quia puer ego.

7. Et dixit Jehova ad me, Ne dicas, Puer ego (*id est,* sum puer,) quia ad quæcunque te misero, ibis, et quæcunque tibi præcepero, loqueris.

After having spoken of his call, the Prophet adds, that he at first refused his office, and he states this for two reasons; first, that he might clear himself from every suspicion of rashness, for we know how much ambition prevails among men, according to what James intimates, that many wish to be teachers, (James iii. 1;) and there is hardly one who is not anxious to be listened to. Since, then, most men too readily assume the office of teaching, and many boldly intrude into it, Jeremiah, in order to avoid the very suspicion of rashness, informs us that he was constrained to take the office. Secondly, he says that he refused the office, that he might gain more esteem, and render his disciples more attentive. But why did he refuse to obey God, when called to the prophetic function? Because its difficulty frightened him: and yet this very reason ought to rouse readers to a greater attention, as it no doubt awakened hearers when Jeremiah spoke to them.

If any one asks, whether Jeremiah acted rightly in refusing what God enjoined? the answer is,—that God pardoned his servant, for it was not his design to reject his call, or to exempt himself from obedience, or to shake off the yoke, because he regarded his own leisure, or his own fame, or any similar considerations: Jeremiah looked on nothing of this kind; but when he thought of himself, he felt that he was wholly unequal to undertake an office so arduous. Hence the excuse that is added is that of modesty. We then see that God forgave his timidity, for it proceeded, as we have just said, from a right feeling; and we know that from good principles vices often arise. But it was yet a laudable thing in Jeremiah, that he thought himself not sufficiently qualified to undertake the prophetic office, and that he wished to be excused, and that another should be chosen endued with more courage and with better qualifications. I shall proceed with what remains to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only provided for thine ancient Church, by choosing JEREMIAH as thy servant, but hast also designed that the fruit of his labours should continue to our

age,—O grant that we may not be unthankful to thee, but that we may so avail ourselves of so great a benefit, that the fruit of it may appear in us to the glory of thy name; may we learn so entirely to devote ourselves to thy service, and each of us be so attentive to the work of his calling, that we may strive with united hearts to promote the honour of thy name, and also the kingdom of thine only-begotten Son, until we finish our warfare, and come at length into that celestial rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only Son. Amen.

Lecture Second.

WE mentioned yesterday the reason why JEREMIAH refused the office of teaching, even because he thought himself unequal to the work; and for this reason he called himself a child, not in age, but in knowledge. Hence the word "child" is to be taken metaphorically; for thereby the Prophet confessed that he was not sufficiently qualified as to knowledge and practice. Some, as I have said, have unwisely applied this to his age. Though then he was of a mature age, yet he called himself a child, because of his unskilfulness, and because he possessed not the gifts necessary for an office so important.[1]

Now follows the answer given to him, *Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go*, &c. God not only predicts here what the Prophet was to do, but declares also what he designed him to do, and what he required from him, as though

[1] The words admit of two meanings. לא־ידעתי דבר—I have not known word, or, I know not word. The phrase may signify, I have no word to say, or, I know not how to say a word. The first meaning is what the context seems to countenance. The answer given to him refers to his two objections—that he had no word to say, and that he was a young man. The last is first answered, according to the usual mode of writing adopted by the prophets, "To every one whom I shall send thee to, thou shalt go;" and then the first objection is removed, "and everything that I shall command thee, thou shalt speak." The answer goes on, and refers to the points in the same order, "Fear not;" and then to remedy the want complained of, Jehovah is represented as putting his words in his mouth, so that he might have what was necessary for him to say. God promised courage though he was young, and gave him a message to deliver: thus his two objections were removed.

We meet with a similar phrase in chap. vi. 15; viii. 12, which is, literally, "and shame they know not."—*Ed.*

he had said, "It is thy duty to obey, because I have the right to command: thou must, therefore, go wheresoever I shall send thee, and thou must also proclaim whatsoever I shall command thee." By these words God reminds him that he was his servant, and that there was no reason why a sense of his own weakness should make him afraid; for it ought to have been enough for him simply to obey his command.

And it is especially necessary to know this doctrine: for as we ought to undertake nothing without considering what our strength is, so when God enjoins anything, we ought immediately to obey his word as it were with closed eyes. Prudence is justly praised by writers; and it is what ought to be attended to by all generally; they ought to consider what the shoulders can bear, and cannot bear. For whence is it that many have so much audacity and boldness, except that they hurry on through extreme self-confidence? Hence, in all undertakings, this should be the first thing, that every one should weigh well his own strength, and take in hand what comports with the measure of his capacity. Then no one would foolishly obtrude himself, and arrogate to himself more than what is right. But when God calls us, we ought to obey, however deficient we may in all things be: and this is what we learn from what God says here, *Say not, I am a child;* that is, "though thou, indeed, thinkest thyself destitute of every qualification, though thou art conscious of thine own weakness, yet thou *shalt go,* thou must go wheresoever I shall send thee." God, then, requires this honour to be simply conceded to him, that men should obey his commands, though the qualification necessary to execute them be wanting. It afterwards follows—

8. Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

8. Ne timeas à facie ipsorum, quia tecum ego (*id est,* ego sum tecum) ad eripiendum te, dicit Jehova.

We may learn from this verse that Jeremiah, when he observed the heavy and hard conflicts he had to undertake, was greatly disturbed; for he had not courage enough firmly and boldly to assail enemies so many and so violent. He indeed saw, that he had to do with a degenerated people,

who had almost all departed from the law of God: and since they had for many years shaken off the yoke, and were petulantly exulting in their freedom, it was difficult to bring them back to obedience, and to a right course of life. It hence appears that the Prophet was restrained by this difficulty, so as not to venture to undertake the prophetic office. But God applied a suitable remedy to his fear; for what does he say? *Fear not their face.* It appears, then, that when Jeremiah said that he was a child, he had in view, as I have already hinted, the difficulty of the undertaking; he could hardly bear to carry on contests so severe with that rebellious people, who had now become hardened in their wickedness. We hence see how he refused, in an indirect manner, the burden laid on him, for he ventured, not openly and ingenuously, and in plain words, to confess how the matter was; but God, who penetrates into the hearts of men, and knows all their hidden feelings and motives, heals his timidity by saying, *Fear not their face.*[1]

Now this passage shows that corruptions had so prevailed among the chosen people, that no servant of God could peaceably perform his office. When prophets and teachers have to do with a teachable people, they have no need to fight: but when there is no fear of God, and no regard for him, yea, when men are led away by the violence of their lusts, no godly teacher can exercise his duty without being prepared for war. This, then, is what God intimates, when he bids his Prophet to be courageous; for he saw that there would be as many enemies as professed themselves to be the children of Abraham.

The reason, also, for boldness and confidence, that is added, ought to be noticed, *For I am with thee to deliver thee.* By

[1] The proper rendering is, "Fear not before them," or, on their account: מִפְּנֵי is invariably a preposition, before, from before, because of, on account of, for, by, through; Deut. ii. 21; Ex. xiv. 19; Deut. vii. 19; Jer. vi. 13; and it is often, though not always, so rendered in our version. The very same phrase is found in Joshua xi. 6, and rendered, "Be not afraid, because of them;" and also in this book, xli. 18, "They were afraid of them." It may, indeed, be rendered, "Fear them not," or, "Be not afraid of them." To introduce "face" or "faces" is by no means right. *Gataker's* rendering is, "Fear not before them;" and *Blayney's*, "Be not thou afraid because of them."—*Ed.*

these words God reminds the Prophet, that there would be sufficient protection in his power, so that he had no need to dread the fury of his own nation. It was, indeed, at first, a formidable undertaking, when Jeremiah saw that he had to carry on war, not with a few men, but with the whole people; but God sets himself in opposition to all men, and says, *I am with thee*,[1] fear not. We hence see that due honour is then conceded to God, when being content with his defence we disregard the fury of men, and hesitate not to contend with all the ungodly, yea, though they may rise up in a mass against us: and were their forces and power the strongest, we ought yet to feel assured that the defence of God alone is sufficient to protect us. This is the full meaning of the passage. It now follows—

9. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth: and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

10. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

9. Et extendit Jehova manum suam, et tetigit os meum; et dixit Jehova ad me, Ecce posui verba mea in ore tuo:

10. Vide, constitui te (*vel*, præfeci) hodie super gentes et super regna, ad evellendum et ad destruendum et ad eruendum et ad perdendum, ad ædificandum et ad plantandum.

Here Jeremiah speaks again of his calling, that his doctrine might not be despised, as though it proceeded from a private individual. He, therefore, testifies again, that he came not of himself, but was sent from above, and was invested with the authority of a prophet. For this purpose he says, that God's words were put in his mouth.

This passage ought to be carefully observed; for Jeremiah briefly describes how a true call may be ascertained, when any one undertakes the office of a teacher in the Church: it is ascertained even by this—when he brings nothing of his own, according to what Peter says in his first canonical epistle, "Let him who speaks, speak as the oracles of God," (1 Pet. iv. 11;) that is, let him not speak doubtingly, as though he introduced his own glosses; but let him boldly,

[1] "Earthly kings and sovereigns," observes *Gataker* on this verse, "are not wont to go with those whom they send on embassage; God goeth along with those whom he sends, and is by his powerful protection, at all times and in all places, present with them."—*Ed.*

and without hesitation, speak in the name of God. So also Jeremiah in this place, in order that he might demand to be heard, plainly declares that the words of God were put in his mouth. Let us, then, know, that whatever proceeds from the wit of man, ought to be disregarded; for God wills this honour to be conceded to him alone, as it was stated yesterday,—to be heard in his own Church. It hence follows, that none ought to be acknowledged as God's servants, that no prophets or teachers ought to be counted true and faithful, except those through whom God speaks, who invent nothing themselves, who teach not according to their own fancies, but faithfully deliver what God has committed to them.

A visible symbol was added, that there might be a stronger confirmation: but there is no reason to make this a general rule, as though it were necessary that the tongues of all teachers should be touched by the hand of God. There are here two things—the thing itself, and the external sign. As to the thing itself, a rule is prescribed to all God's servants, that they bring not their own inventions, but simply deliver, as from hand to hand, what they have received from God. But it was a special thing as to Jeremiah, that God, by stretching out his hand, *touched his mouth;* it was, that he might openly shew that his mouth was consecrated to himself. It is therefore sufficient as to the ministers of the word, that their tongues be consecrated to God, so that they may not mix any of their own fictions with his pure doctrine. But it was God's will, as to Jeremiah, to add also the visible signs of the thing itself, by extending his hand and touching his mouth.

God having now shewn that Jeremiah's mouth was consecrated to himself, and separated from common and profane use, proceeds to invest him with power: *See*, he says, *I have set thee this day over nations and over kingdoms.* By these words God shews how reverently he would have his word received, even when conveyed by frail mortals. There is no one who pretends not, that he desires to obey God, but yet hardly one in a hundred really receives his word. For as soon as he speaks, almost all raise a clamour; or if they dare not

furiously, and in a hostile manner, oppose it, we yet see how some evade it, and others secretly oppose it. The authority, then, which God ascribes to his own word, ought to be noticed by us: *Behold, I have set thee over nations and kingdoms.*

Farther, by saying, *See, I have set thee,* he encourages the Prophet to be magnanimous in spirit. He was to remember his calling, and not timidly or servilely to flatter men, or to show indulgence to their lusts and passions: *See,* he says. We may hence perceive, that teachers cannot firmly execute their office except they have the majesty of God before their eyes, so that in comparison with him they may disregard whatever splendour, pomp, or power there may be in men. Experience indeed teaches us, that the sight of men, whatever dignity they may possess, be it the least, brings fear with it. Why are prophets and teachers sent? That they may reduce the world to order: they are not to spare their hearers, but freely reprove them whenever there may be need; they are also to use threatenings when they find men perverse. But when there is any dignity connected with men, the teacher dares not to offend; he is afraid of those who are invested with power, or who possess wealth, or a high character for prudence, or who are endued with great honours. In such cases there is no remedy, except teachers set God before their eyes, and regard him to be himself the speaker. They may thus with courageous and elevated minds look down on whatever height and pre-eminence there may be among mortals. This, then, is the object of what God says here, *See, I have set thee over nations and kingdoms;* for he shews that there is so much authority in his word, that whatever is high and exalted on earth is made subject to it; even kings are not excepted.

But what God has joined together let no man separate. (Matt. xix. 6; Mark x. 9.) God indeed extols here his Prophets above the whole world, and even above kings; but he has previously said, *Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth;* so that whosoever claims such a power, must necessarily bring forth the word of God, and really prove that he is a prophet, and that he introduces no fictions of his own. And hence we see how fatuitous is the boasting of the Pope, and

of his filthy clergy, when they wickedly dare to appropriate to themselves what is here said. "We are," they say, "above both kings and nations." By what right? "God hath thus spoken by the Prophet Jeremiah." But these two things are to be joined together—*I have put my words in thy mouth*, and, *I have set thee over nations and kingdoms*. Now let the Pope shew that he is furnished with the word of God, that he claims for himself nothing that is his own, or apart from God; in a word, that he introduces nothing of his own devices, and we shall willingly allow that he is pre-eminent above the whole world. For God is not to be separated from his word: as his majesty shines eminently above the whole world, yea, and above all the angels of heaven; so there is the same dignity belonging to his word. But as these swine and dogs are empty of all true doctrine and piety, what effrontery it is, yea, what stupidity, to boast that they have authority over kings and nations! We, in short, see from the context, that men are not here so much extolled, though they be true ministers of celestial truth, as the truth itself; for God ascribes here the highest authority to his own word, though its ministers were men of no repute, poor and despised, and having nothing splendid connected with them. The purpose for which this was said I have already explained; it was, that true prophets and teachers may take courage, and thus boldly set themselves against kings and nations, when armed with the power of celestial truth.

He then adds, *To root up, to destroy, to pull down, to lay waste*. God seems here to have designedly rendered odious his own word and the ministry of the Prophet; for the word of God in the mouth of Jeremiah could not have been acceptable to the Jews, except they perceived that it was for their safety and welfare: but God speaks here of ruin and destruction, of cutting down and desolation. But he subjoins, *to build and to plant*. God then ascribes two effects to his word,—that on the one hand it *destroys, pulls down, lays waste, cuts off;* and that on the other it *plants* and *builds*.

But it may, however, be rightly asked, why does God at first speak of ruin and extermination? The order would have seemed better had he said first, I set thee to *build* and

to *plant*, according to what is said by Paul, who declares that vengeance was prepared by him and the other teachers against all despisers, and against all the height of the world, when your obedience, he says, shall be completed. (2 Cor. x. 5, 6.) Paul then intimates that the doctrine of the gospel is properly, and in the first place, designed for this end —to call men to the service of God. But Jeremiah here puts ruin and destruction before building and planting. It then seems, as I have said, that he acts inconsistently. But we must ever bear in mind what the state of the people was: for impiety, perverseness, and hardened iniquity had for so long a time prevailed, that it was necessary to begin with ruin and eradication; for Jeremiah could not have planted or have built the temple of God, except he had first destroyed, pulled down, laid waste, and cut off. How so? Because the Devil had erected there his palace; for as true religion had been for many years despised, the Devil was there placed, as it were, on his high throne, and reigned uncontrolled at Jerusalem, and through the whole land of Judea. How, then, could he have built there a temple for God, in which he might be purely worshipped, except ruin and destruction had preceded? for the Devil had corrupted the whole land. We indeed know that all kinds of wickedness then prevailed everywhere, as though the land had been filled with thorns and briers. Jeremiah then could not have planted or sown his heavenly doctrine until the land had been cleansed from so many vices and pollutions. This is no doubt the reason why in the first place he speaks of cutting off and ruin, of exterminating and eradicating, and afterwards adds planting and building.

The heap of words employed shews how deep impiety and the contempt of God had fixed their roots. God might have said only, I have set thee to pull down and to destroy; he might have been content with two words, as in the latter instance—to plant and to build. But as the Jews had been obstinate in their wickedness, as their insolence had been so great, they could not be corrected immediately, nor in one day, nor by a slight effort. Hence God accumulated words, and thus encouraged his Prophet to proceed with unwearied

zeal in the work of clearing away the filth which had polluted the whole land. We now then understand what is here said, and the purpose of using so many words.[1]

But he speaks again of kingdoms and nations; for though Jeremiah was given as a Prophet especially to his own nation, yet he was also a Prophet to heathen nations, as they say, by accident, according to what we shall hereafter see: and it seems that God designedly mentioned nations and kingdoms, in order to humble the pride of that people who thought themselves exempt from all reproof. Hence he says, that he gave authority to his servant, not only over Judea, but also over the whole world; as though he had said, "Ye are but a small portion of mankind; raise not then your horns against my servant, as ye shall do this without effect; for he shall exercise power not only over Judea, but also over all nations, and even over kings, as the doctrine which I have deposited with him is of such force and power that it will stand eminent above all mortals, much more above one single nation."

We at the same time see that though the treachery of men constrains God to use severity, yet he never forgets his own nature, and kindly invites to repentance those who are

[1] The whole of this verse is arranged according to the usual manner of the Prophets. The word "nations" comes first, and then "kingdoms." Three lines follow; the first word in each line refers to "kingdoms," and the last to "nations." The ו, *vau*, in the second line is omitted in many copies, and there seems to be no need of it; and it is not true what *Blayney* says, that there are MSS. which supply the ו before the last line, though it be supplied by the *Septuagint*. To preserve the distinct meaning of each verb, I offer the following rendering:—

See, I have set thee this day
Over nations and over kingdoms,
To root up, and to break down,
To destroy, and to erase,
To build up, and to plant.

He was to root up kingdoms, and to break down nations; then he adds stronger words, for he was to destroy, or wholly to destroy kingdoms, and to erase or to obliterate nations. The reason for the repetition is well stated by *Calvin*. As to his other work, two words only are used: he was to build up kingdoms, and to plant nations. A nation, of course, exists before a kingdom, and this order is observed in the second line; but the order, as it is usual with the sacred writers, not only of the Old, but also of the New Testament, is then reversed. See an instance in Rom. x. 9, 10, where indeed the true order is given last, the ostensible act being in the first instance stated, and then the principle from which it proceeds.—*Ed.*

not wholly past remedy, and offers to them the hope of pardon and of salvation; and this is what celestial truth ever includes. For though it be the odour of death unto death to those who perish, it is yet the odour of life unto life to the elect of God. It indeed often happens that the greater part turn the doctrine of salvation to their ruin; yet God never suffers all to perish. He therefore makes the truth the incorruptible seed of life to his elect, and builds them up as his temples. This is what we must bear in mind. And so there is no reason why the truth of God should be disliked by us, though it be the occasion of perdition to many; for it always brings salvation to the elect: it so plants them, that they strike roots into the hope of a blessed immortality, and then it builds them for holy temples unto God. It now follows—

11. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree.

12. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

11. Et (*hoc est*, postea) factus est sermo Jehovæ ad me (*datus est mihi*, fuit, *ad verbum*,) dicendo, Quid tu vides, Jeremia? Et dixi, Baculum vigilis (*aut*, amigdali) ego video.

12. Et dixit Jehova ad me, Bene fecisti ad videndum (*hoc est*, rectè vidisti,) quia vigilo (*aut*, festino, vigilans ego, *ad verbum*) super sermonem meum ut ipsum faciam (*hoc est*, ut compleam.)

God confirms in this passage what he had previously said of the power of his word. These two verses, then, are to be taken as explanatory, for no new subject is introduced; but the former part is confirmed—that the Prophets spoke not in vain, or to no purpose, because they were invested with celestial power to plant and to build, and, on the other hand, to pull down and to root up, according to what we have quoted from Paul, who says that true teachers are armed with such power. (2 Cor. x. 5, 6.) We have in readiness, he says, vengeance against all the unbelieving, however proud they may be: and though their height may terrify the whole world, yet we have a sword in our hands which will slay them; for God's word has sufficient power to destroy the rebellious.

God then proceeds with the same subject when he says, *What seest thou, Jeremiah?* He had set before him a staff

or a rod of almond, as some render the word: and שָׁקֵד, *shaked*, means an almond; but as it comes from a verb which means to watch or to hasten, we cannot fitly render it here, almond. I do not, however, deny that the Hebrew word has this meaning. But it is written here with *Kamets;* the participle which afterwards follows has *Holem:* we hence see what affinity there is between the two words. The word שָׁקֵד, *shaked*, an almond, is derived from the verb, שָׁקַד, *shakad*, to watch; and it has been thought that this tree is so called, because it brings forth fruit earlier than other trees; for almonds, as it is well known, flower even in winter, and in the coldest seasons. Now, were we to say in Latin, I see a rod or a staff of almond; and were the answer given, Thou hast rightly seen, for I watch, the allusion in the words would not appear, the sentence would lose its beauty, and there would indeed be no meaning. It is hence necessary to give another version, except we wish to pervert the passage, and to involve the Prophet's meaning in darkness. It should be, "I see the rod," or the staff, "of a watcher." Let us grant that the almond is intended; yet the tree may be called watchful, according to what etymology requires, and also the sense of the passage, as all must see.[1]

God then caused his servant to see the staff of a watcher. For what purpose? The answer is given: *Thou hast rightly seen the staff of a watcher, because I watch over my word to execute* (or, fulfil) *it.* Interpreters seem to have unwisely confined this to the punishments afterwards mentioned: they think that what is intimated is, that the threatenings

[1] The word is rendered "a rod of almond" by the *Septuagint*, the *Arabic* version, and *Theodotion;* and also by *Piscator*, *Drusius*, *Grotius*, and *Blayney;* and "the rod of the watcher" by *Sym.*, *Aq.*, and the *Vulgate*. The latter is no doubt more suitable in a translation. Some conclude, from what is related in Num. xvii., that the head of each tribe carried a wand or a staff made of the almond tree as a token of watchfulness: if so, the probability is, that this wand was presented to the view of the Prophet. It being a well-known emblem of watchfulness, and called perhaps the watchful rod or staff, it was most suitable to the purposes here designed. The verb שָׁקַד does not mean to hasten, but to watch, or to be awake. Then the version of the passage would be the following:—

11. And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, "What seest thou, Jeremiah?" and I said, "The rod of a watcher is what I see."
12. Then Jehovah said to me, "Thou seest rightly, for I am watching over my word to do it."—*Ed.*

which the Prophet announced would not be without effect, because God was prepared to inflict whatever he would denounce. But this, as I think, is too restricted a view; for God, I have no doubt, extols here his own word, and speaks of its accomplishment; as though he had said, that he spoke not by his servants, that what they said might vanish into air, or fall to the ground, but that power would accompany it, according to what is said in Isaiah, "Not return shall my word to me empty, but shall prosper in all things," (Is. lv. 11;) that is, "I will cause the prophetic doctrine to take effect, that the whole world may know that I have not spoken in vain, and that my word is not an empty sound, but that it has real power, which in due time will appear."

Hence I have said that these verses ought to be connected with the last, in which God said, that he sent his Prophet to root up and to plant, to demolish and to build. He then gives a proof of this in other words, and says that he would *watch over his word*, that he might execute whatever he had announced by his servants; as though he had said, "I indeed allot their parts (so to speak) to the prophets; but as they speak from my mouth, I am present with them to fulfil whatever I command them." In short, God intimates that the might and the power of his hand would be connected with the word, of which the prophets were ministers among men. Thus it is a general declaration which refers not only to punishments, but also to promises. *Rightly*, then, *hast thou seen*, he says; *for I am watching.*

God does not here resign his own office to Jeremiah, though he employs him as his teacher; for he shows that the power to accomplish what the Prophet would declare remained with him. God indeed does not here ascribe to Jeremiah anything as his own, or apart from himself, but sets forth only the power of his word; as though he had said, "Provided thou be my faithful minister, I will not frustrate thy hope, nor the hope of those who shall obey thee; for I will fulfil whatever thou and they may justly hope for: nor shall they escape unpunished who shall resist thee; for I will in due time bring on them the punishment they deserve."

He therefore uses the word to *watch*, or to hasten, in order to shew that he stood ready to give effect to his word at the appointed time. The effect does not indeed always appear to us: it is on this account said by Habakkuk, that if prophecy delays, we are to wait; "for it will not be," he says, "beyond its time; but coming it will come." (Hab. ii. 3.) God then bids us with quiet minds to wait for the accomplishment of his word; but he afterwards adds, in order to modify what he had said, "coming it will come;" that is, "I will accomplish and really perform whatever my prophets have spoken by my command." So there shall be no delay, for the suitable time depends on God's will, and not on the judgment of men. It then follows,—but as the clock strikes, I cannot proceed farther to-day.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou art pleased kindly to invite us to thyself, and hast consecrated thy word for our salvation,—O grant that we may willingly, and from the heart, obey thee, and become so teachable, that what thou hast designed for our salvation may not turn to our perdition; but may that incorruptible seed by which thou dost regenerate us into a hope of the celestial life so drive its roots into our hearts, and bring forth fruit, that thy name may be glorified; and may we be so planted in the courts of thine house, that we may grow and flourish, and that fruit may appear through the whole course of our life, until we shall at length enjoy that blessed life which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Third.

13. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething-pot; and the face thereof *is* toward the north.

14. Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

13. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad me secundò, dicendo, Quid tu vides? Et dixi, Ollam ferventem ego video, facies ejus à facie Aquilonis.

14. Et dixit Jehova ad me, Ab Aquilone aperietur (*alii vertunt*, pendetur; *alii*, solvetur; erumpet, *propriè*) malum super cunctos habitatores terræ.

JEREMIAH begins now to address the people to whom he was sent as a Prophet. He has hitherto spoken of his call-

ing, that the authority of his doctrine might be evident: and he spoke generally; but now he accommodates his teaching specially to the people. Hence he says, that he had a vision, and saw a *boiling-pot*, whose face *was towards the north*. By God asking, and the Prophet answering, the design was to confirm the prediction; for if it had been only said that he saw a boiling-pot, and if an explanation of the metaphor had been given, there would not have been so much force and weight in the narrative. But when God is set forth as being present, and explaining what the boiling-pot signified, the prediction becomes more certain: and the Prophet no doubt gave this narrative, in order to show that God, being as it were present, thereby proved himself to be the Author of this prophecy.

Now the import of the whole is, that the Chaldeans would come to overthrow the city Jerusalem, to take away and abolish all the honour and dignity both of the kingdom and of the priesthood.

This indeed had been previously announced by Isaiah as well as by other prophets; but all their threatenings had been despised. While indeed Isaiah was living, the king of Babylon had secured the friendship of Hezekiah; and the Jews thought that his protection had been opportunely obtained against the Assyrians. But they did not consider that the hearts of men are ruled by the hand of God, and are turned as he pleases: nor did they consider that they had for many years provoked God, and that he was become their enemy. Since, then, all threatening had been despised and regarded with derision, Jeremiah came forth and declared, that the northern nations would come, the Assyrians as well as the Chaldeans. For we know that the one monarchy had been swallowed up by the other; and the Chaldeans ruled over the Assyrians; and thus it happened that the whole eastern empire, with the exception of the Medes and Persians, had passed over to them; and with respect to Judea, they were northward. Hence the Prophet says, that he saw a *boiling-pot*, having its face towards the north.

By the pot many understand the king of Babylon; but they seem not rightly to understand what the Prophet says:

and I could easily disprove their interpretation, but I shall be satisfied with a simple statement of what is true; and the meaning will become evident as we proceed. The pot, then, as it will be presently seen more clearly, is the nation of the Jews: I say this now, as I do not wish to heap together too many things. They are said to be like a boiling-pot, because the Lord, as it were, boiled them, until they were reduced almost to nothing. It is said also, that the face of the pot was towards the north; because there, as Jeremiah immediately explains, was the fire kindled. And the comparison is very apposite; for when a pot is set on the fire, it boils on that side nearest the fire, and all the scum passes over to the other side. Hence he says that it boiled, but so that its mouth was on the north side; for there was the fire, and there was the blowing. In short, God intended to show to his Prophet, that the people were like flesh which is cast into the pot, boiled, and afterwards burnt, or reduced after a long time almost to nothing. The Prophet saw the mouth or the face of the boiling-pot, and on the side on which it boiled it looked towards the north; hence God, the interpreter of the vision which he presented to his servant, answers and says, *From the north shall break forth evil on all the inhabitants of the land*, that is, of Judea. In these words God declares, that the fire was already kindled by the Chaldeans and the Assyrians, by which he would boil, as it were, his people like flesh, and at length wholly consume them, as it is commonly the case, when the flesh remains in the pot, and the fire is continually burning, and blowing is also added; the flesh must necessarily be reduced to nothing when thus boiled or seethed.[1]

[1] Most agree with *Calvin*, that the pot means the Jewish nation; so the learned *Gataker* in the Ass. Ann., *Grotius*, *Henry*, and *Scott*. There is some difference as to "its face." The first of these authors, followed by the two last, thinks that the face means the front of the fire or the hearth, and therefore the front of the pot. This face or front was towards the north, signifying that the fuel and the blowing would be from that quarter, as it is afterwards stated. As to the metaphor, the pot, or cauldron, see Ezek. xi. 3, 7; xxiv. 3, 5.

The version of the Geneva Bible is, "I see a seething-pot looking out of the north;" and the Chaldean army is regarded as the pot: and *Blayney*, following the marginal reading of our version, has given a similar rendering, "and the face thereof is turned from the north." But פניו is

And thus God testifies that the fire was already kindled in Chaldea and Assyria, which was not only to boil the Jews, but also reduce them to nothing. And then he expresses the same in other words—that *evil would come from the north* upon all the Jews. We shall hereafter see that there is presented here a brief summary of the truth which was committed to Jeremiah; at least it is a summary of one half of it; for God designed also to provide for his own elect; and he thus terrified them, that they might be subdued, and submit to him, and not that they might abandon themselves to despair. At the same time, this half of the prediction was—that there was no hope of pardon, because the Jews had with extreme obstinacy provoked God's wrath, and had so abused his patience, that their impiety could no longer be tolerated. Hence, what other prophets had denounced Jeremiah now confirms more strongly, and points it out, as it were, by the finger. It afterwards follows—

15. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

15. Quoniam ecce ego voco omnes familias regnorum Aquilonis, dicit Jehova, et venient; ponent quisque solium suum in ostio postarum Jerosolymæ, et super omnes muros ejus in circuitu, et super omnes urbes Jehudah.

This verse contains an explanation of the last; for God more clearly and more specifically expresses what he had before referred to—that the evil would come from the north. He says that he would be the sender of this evil, and speaks thus of it: *Behold, I call all the families of the kingdoms of the north.* The prediction would not have been so effectual had not this declaration been expressly added—that the

a preposition, and rendered often, "from before," and, "before," (see note on verse 8;) and to say that its face was before the north means the same as towards the north: and this is the rendering of *Jun.* and *Trem.*, and *Piscator*, "versus Aquilonem."

"The boiling-pot" is a pot "kindled under—ὑποκαιόμενον," by the *Sept.* The literal rendering of סִיר נָפוּחַ is, "a pot blown," meaning the fire under it. It was a pot set on a fire that was blown, and the front of it was toward the north, from whence the blowing came. The same word as a noun is used by Jeremiah in chap. vi. 29, and signifies an instrument for blowing, and is rendered "bellows" in our version. It was then a pot set on a fire that was blown, which intimated the severe calamities which the Jews were soon to endure, as *Grotius* observes.—*Ed.*

Chaldeans would come by the authority of God; for men are ever wont to ascribe to fortune whatever takes place: and we shall hereafter see in the Book of Lamentations (Lam. iii. 37, 38) that the Jews were so besotted, that in their calamities they attributed to the events of fortune the destruction of the temple and city, and the ruin of the kingdom. Hence God sharply expostulated with them, because they were so blind in a matter so clear, and did not acknowledge his judgments. The Prophet, then, after having testified that the evil would come from the north, now adds, that this evil would by no means be by chance, but through that war which the Chaldeans would bring on them; that God would be the chief commander, who would gather soldiers from all parts, and prepare an army to destroy the Jews.

The Prophet uses the word, to cry: *Behold,* he says, *I will cry* to all the kindreds, or families, &c.[1] God employs various modes of speaking, when he intends to teach us that all nations are in his hand, and subject to his will, so that he can excite wars whenever it pleases him. He says, "Behold, I will hiss (or whistle) for the Egyptians;" and he compares them sometimes to bees. (Is. v. 26; vii. 18.) Again, in another place he says, "Behold, I will blow with the trumpet, and assemble shall the Assyrians." All these modes of speaking are intended to show, that though men make a great stir, and disturb the whole world, yet God directs all things by his sovereign power, and that nothing takes place except under his guidance and authority. We then see that the Prophet does not speak as an historian; nor does he simply predict what was to be, but also adds a doctrine or a great truth. It would have been a naked prediction only, had he said, "An evil shall break forth from the north:" but he now, as I have already said, performs the office of a teacher, that his prediction might be useful, and says that God would be the chief commander in that war: *Behold,* then, *I will cry to all the families*[2] *of the kingdoms of the north.*

[1] Perhaps the more literal rendering would be, "I will call to," or for. The version of *Septuagint* is, "συγκάλω—I will summon;" of *Vatablus,* "invitabo—I will invite;" of *Piscator,* "vocabo—I will call;" and of *Blayney,* "I will call for."—*Ed.*

[2] They are called "families," say some, because kings are called fathers;

There was then indeed but one monarchy; but as the self-confidence of the Jews was so great, and hence their sottishness, so that they dreaded no evil, God, in order to arouse them, says that he would assemble all the families of the kingdoms: and doubtless those belonged to many kingdoms whom God brought together against the Jews. A regard also was had to that vain confidence which the Jews entertained, in thinking that the Egyptians would be ever ready to supply them with help. As, then, they were wont to set up the Egyptians as their shield, or even as a mountain, God here exposes their folly,—that trusting in the Egyptians, they thought themselves sufficiently fortified against the power and arms of the whole Chaldean monarchy. For these reasons, then, he mentions the *families*, and then the *kingdoms*, of the north.

It follows, *And they shall come*, and *set each* (man, literally) *his throne*[1] *at the entrance of the gates.* The Prophet here means that the power of the Chaldeans would be such, that they would boldly pitch their tents before the gates, and not only so, but would also close up the smaller gates, for he mentions *the doors* (*ostia*) *of the gates.*[2] And by speaking of each of them, he meant the more sharply to touch the Jews: for they, relying on the help of Egypt, thought themselves capable of resisting, while yet the Chal-

but probable it is a mode of speaking retained from primitive times, as we find that those called "families" in Gen. xii. 3, are called "nations" in Gen. xxii. 18.—*Ed.*

[1] The original word, כִּסֵּא, not only means a throne, but a seat; see 1 Sam. i. 9; iv. 18; and 2 Kings iv. 10, where it is rendered in our version "a stool." *Grotius* renders it here "prætorium castrense—a camp's tent." The "throne" is derived from the *Septuagint.*—*Ed.*

[2] Literally it is "The opening of the gates." The preposition *at* is not in the original; and the word in some other places is found without it. See Gen. xix. 11; xliii. 17. The preposition ἐπὶ is given by the *Septuagint*, "ἐπὶ τὰ πρόθυρα—at or in the vestibules," &c. We have the fulfilment of this expressly recorded in chap. xxxix. 3. The idea suggested by *Adam Clarke*, that they would sit as judges in the gates, as these were the courts of justice, is evidently not intended here; for they would also fix their tents or their seats by or on the walls, and in all the cities of Judah. The latter portion of the verse may be thus rendered,—

And they shall come, and set, each his seat,
At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,
And on all its walls around,
And on all the cities of Judah.

The description betokens an entire possession of the whole land.—*Ed.*

deans, who had conquered the Assyrians, would be irresistible. Hence he says, that not only the army itself would encamp before the gates, but that each individual would fix himself there, and set up his tent as in a place of safety. In short, God intimates that the Chaldeans and Assyrians would be victorious, that they would entirely rule and rest themselves as at their own homes, in the fields and before the gates of the city Jerusalem. These things are afterwards more distinctly expressed, and many circumstances are added: but God intended at first to announce this declaration, that the Jews might know that it would be all over with them.

He then says, *On its walls around, and on all the cities of Judah.* The Prophet here declares, that the whole country would be laid waste, as though he had said, "The Jews in vain trust to their own resources, and help from others, for God will fight against them; and as the Chaldeans and the Assyrians shall be armed by him, they shall be victorious, whatever force the Jews may oppose to them." It follows—

16. And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

16. Et loquar (*vel*, proferam) judicia mea cum ipsis super omni malitia eorum; quia (*nam* אשר *hic ponitur vice* כי, *valet causalem particulam*, quia) dereliquerunt me, et suffitum fecerunt diis alienis et prostrati fuerunt (*vel*, se prostraverunt) coram operibus manuum suarum.

God now assigns the reason why he had resolved to deal so severely with the Jews. It was necessary to teach them two things,—first, that the Chaldeans would not of themselves come upon them, but through God, who would gather and arm them; and secondly, that God would not act in a cruel manner, nor forget his covenant, in becoming a rigid avenger, but that he would thus be angry, because there was extreme iniquity in the Jews, so that it was needful to distress and wholly to break them down, as moderate corrections had availed nothing. God, then, after having testified that he would be the leader in that war, now explains the reasons why he would chastise the Jews, and shews that his conduct towards them could not be ascribed to cruelty, inasmuch as that they had provoked him by their impious superstitions.

Hence he says, *I will speak my judgments with them.* This is referred by many interpreters to the Chaldeans and Assyrians, as though God would prescribe to them what was to be decreed, as chief judges are wont to do to those who are under them: but this exposition is strained, and confuted by what follows, *on account of their wickedness.* What, then, is to speak judgments? It is done, when God summons the wicked before his tribunal, and executes the office of a judge. And this mode of speaking is common in Scripture, according to what we read at the end of this book,—The king of Babylon *spoke judgments with* the King Zedekiah, (chap. lii. 9;) that is, he dealt judicially with him, as we commonly say.[1] So now God declares that he would be the judge of the people, as though he had said, that hitherto he had been silent, not that the sins of the people were not known, but because he had borne with them, in order to try whether there was any hope of repentance. But he says now that he would become their judge, as he had found by long experience that they were past remedy.

[1] The idea conveyed by the *Septuagint* is somewhat different, and I believe that it is what the original words mean, "λαλήσω πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ κρίσεως —I will speak to them with judgment." The original literally is, "and I will speak my judgments to them:" that is, I will not speak words but judgments: or, I will not address them with words, but with actual judgments. Then in the following words the reason is assigned. The verse may be thus rendered,—

16. And I will speak *by* my judgments to them,
On account of all their wickedness,
Because they have forsaken me,
And have burnt incense to strange gods,
And have bowed down to the work of their own hands.

It is better to retain the outward act as expressed by the last verb, "bowed down," or, more literally, "bowed down themselves," as the verb is in the reflective mood, than to adopt the abstract term "worshipped." So the verb is rendered in the second commandment, Ex. xx. 5; Deut. v. 9.

The first line is rendered by *Grotius*, "*Prædicam* illis decreta mea—I will declare to them my decrees," that is, by Jeremiah and others.—by *Jun.* and *Trem.*, "I will speak my judgments against them," that is, by the prophets,—by *Henry*, "I will pass sentence upon them,"—by *Blayney*, "I will pronounce my judgments against them;" and *Scott* gives the same view. But *Gataker* says, "It seems rather to import an efficacious and actual decree that God would, in his own appointed time, pass upon them, and put in execution by the Chaldeans." Hence he renders the phrase like *Henry*, "I will pass sentence," or, "give judgment, upon them."—*Ed.*

There is, then, to be understood a contrast between the forbearance of God, which he had long exercised while he dealt with the people, not as he might have justly done, but deferred his vengeance, and the time of vengeance which was now at hand; *I will* then *speak my judgments* with the Jews; that is, "I will now ascend my tribunal: I have hitherto abstained from exercising my right, and waited for them to return to me; but as there is no return, and I see that they are men wholly irreclaimable, and their disposition is so depraved that they continually add evils to evils, I will now begin to undertake mine office, the office of a judge." But we must bear in mind, as I have already said, the design of God in this declaration; for it was his object to clear himself from every charge, and from all calumnies, inasmuch as even the worst of men usually clamour against his judgments when he chastises them. Hence he presented before them his own judgments, as though he had said, "They shall not be able to blame me for dealing with them in a severe and cruel manner; for however severe I may be, I shall yet be an equitable judge." Hence he adds, *on account of all their wickedness.*

He afterwards shews what kind of wickedness it was, *They have forsaken me,* and *burnt incense to strange gods.* The Jews had, indeed, in various ways, provoked his vengeance; but he mentions here one kind of wickedness, because it was the very fountain of evils,—they had departed from the law and the pure worship of God; and yet he mentions generally *all wickedness.* The word *all* is not here without meaning, "on account of *all* their wickedness:" for he intimates that they were not only in one way wicked, but that they had heaped together various sins. And then he adds, *for they have forsaken me.* Here God introduces their defection; for it may be, as we daily see, that one offends in this thing, and another in that, and each one for different causes may expose himself to God's judgment; but God shews here that the Jews were become so depraved, that there was nothing sound or pure in them: hence he charges them with *all wickedness;* and then he mentions their defection, *they have forsaken me;* as though he had said,

"They have wholly denied me; I say not that one is a thief, another an adulterer, and another a drunkard; but they are all become apostates, they are all perjurers and violators of the covenant: thus I am wholly forsaken by them, and they are in every respect alienated from me." We hence see how greatly the Prophet enhances the guilt of his own nation.

It is afterwards added, for the sake of illustration, that they *burnt incense to strange gods.* They had fallen away from God, and joined themselves to idolatry. He also adds this,—that they *bowed down before the works of their own hands.* The Prophet divests the Jews of every excuse, and more fully discovers their shame and baseness,—"they prostrated themselves before the works of their own hands." Whenever Scripture uses these expressions, it intimates that there is extreme madness in those men, who worship in the place of God not only the sun and moon, and other created things, but also the idols which they form for themselves. For how is it that they worship their own idols, except that they have formed for them a nose, and hands, and ears? A log of wood no one worships; a piece of brass or of silver all disregard; no one thinks a stone to be God: but when a thing is sculptured and artificially formed by the hand of man, miserable and blind idolaters immediately prostrate themselves;—how is this? Because they have formed for their statues and pictures noses, eyes, and ears! hence they themselves have made gods. We now see the meaning of the Prophet, when he says, that the Jews *bowed down before the works of their own hands.* But I pass over such things as these lightly, as ye must be well informed on the subject generally. It now follows—

17. Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

17. Et tu accinge lumbos tuos et surge, et loquere ad ipsos quæcunque (*vel*, omnia quæ) ego mandavero tibi; ne timeas à facie ipsorum, ne te conteram (*vel*, timere faciam) à facie ipsorum (*est enim verbum sumptum ex eadem radice.*)

God first bids his Prophet to be the herald of the dreadful judgment, which we have already noticed: for it was not his purpose to speak only as it were in a corner, or secretly,

to Jeremiah, but he committed to him what he intended should be proclaimed audibly to the whole people. It hence follows, *And thou*, &c. We therefore see that the Prophet had been taught by the Lord, that he might confidently and boldly declare what we shall hereafter see. These things should then be connected,—that God would ascend his tribunal to execute the vengeance he had deferred,—and also that Jeremiah would be the herald of that vengeance he was prepared to inflict. *Thou then*,—an illative is to be added here, for the copulative is to be thus taken in this place,—*Thou then;* that is, as thou hast heard that I shall be now the avenger of the people's sins, and that the time of vengeance is at hand; and also as thou knowest that this has been told thee, that thou mightest warn them to render them more inexcusable,—*Thou* then,[1] *gird thy loins*. We see why God addressed his servant Jeremiah privately; it was, that he might publicly exercise his office as a teacher.

And hence we learn, that all who are called to rule the Church of God cannot be exempt from blame, unless they honestly and boldly proclaim what has been committed to them. Hence Paul says that he was free from the blood of all men, because he had from house to house and publicly declared whatever he had received from the Lord, (Acts xx. 26, 27;) and he says in another place, "Woe is to me if I preach not the Gospel, for it has been committed to me." (1 Cor. ix. 16.)

God bids the Prophet to *gird his loins*. This is to be understood of the kind of dress which the orientals used and continue to use, for they wear long garments; and when they undertake any work, or when they proceed on a journey, they gird themselves. Hence he says, *gird thy loins*, that is, undertake this expedition which I devolve on thee. At the

[1] This is correctly given, only the ו need not be rendered "then" or "therefore." It is an instance of the nominative absolute, or of the anticipative case,—

And thou, gird thy loins,
And arise, and speak to them
All that I shall command thee.

"And as for thee," by *Blayney*, is very tame and prosaic. The version of the *Geneva Bible* is, "Thou, therefore, trusse up thy loyns." —*Ed.*

same time he requires activity, so that the work might be expeditiously undertaken. *Arise*, he says, *and speak to them whatsoever I shall command thee.* In short, God intimates in these words, that he was unwilling to proceed to extremes, until he had still tried whether there was any hope of repentance as to the people. He indeed knew that they were wholly irreclaimable; but he intended to discover more fully their perverseness in bidding Jeremiah, in the last place, to pronounce the extreme sentence of condemnation.

He now again repeats what he had before said, *Fear not their face.* And this exhortation was very needful, as Jeremiah undertook an office in no small degree disliked; for it was the same as though he was an herald to proclaim war in the name of God. As, then, Jeremiah had distinctly to declare that it was all over with the people, because their perverseness had been so great that God would no longer be entreated, it was a very hard message, not likely to be attended to, especially when we consider what great pride the Jews had. They gloried in their holy descent, and also thought, as we shall hereafter see, that the Temple was an impregnable fortress even against God himself. Since, then, their temper was so refractory, it was needful that the Prophet should be more than once confirmed by God, so that he might boldly undertake his office. The exhortation is, therefore, repeated, *Fear not before them.*

He afterwards adds, *lest I make thee to fear.* But the word חת, *chet*, means sometimes to fear, and sometimes to break in pieces. Jerome perverts the meaning of the Prophet, by rendering the phrase, "I shall never make thee to fear." It is indeed a godly truth, that God would give courage to his Prophet so as to render him invincible against his enemies; and doubtless he would exhort us in vain, were he not to supply us with fortitude by his Spirit. This is, indeed, true; but the word פֶּן, *pen*, will not allow us thus to explain the passage. What then does God mean? We must either render the verb to break or to fear. The verb אחתך, *achetak*, is transitive; and either meaning would be suitable. For God, after having bidden the Prophet to be of a courageous and invincible mind, now adds, "Take heed to thyself; for

if thou be timid, I will cause thee really to fear, or, I will break thee down before them." He then intimates, in these words, that the Prophet ought to be sufficiently fortified, as he knew that he was sent by God, and thus acted as it were under the authority of the highest power, and that he should not fear any mortal man.[1] There is also to be understood here a threatening, "See, if thou conductest thyself courageously I shall be present with thee, and however formidable at the first view thy opponents may be, they shall not yet prevail; but if thou be timid and faint-hearted,[2] I will render thee an object of contempt: thou shalt not only be timid in heart; but I will make thee to be despised by all, so that thou shalt be contemptuously treated; for in that case thou wilt not be worthy that I should fight for thee and supply thee with any courage and power to put thine enemies to flight."

We hence see what this means, *Fear not, lest I should make thee to fear;* that is, "Be of a good courage and of a ready mind, lest thou be justly exposed to shame; and fear them not, lest thou shouldest really fear them, and lest they should even tear thee to pieces and tread thee under their

[1] It is true that the primary meaning of the verb here used is, to be broken, or to be broken down, to be broken in pieces. It is applied to the breaking of a bow, and to the breaking down of images, 1 Sam. ii. 4; Jer. l. 2; and to the breaking down of nations, (Is. viii. 9; xxx. 31.) Such is its meaning when applied to what is material and visible; but when applied to the mind or spirit, it means to be dispirited, daunted, terrified, or dismayed, 2 Kings xix. 26; Jer. viii. 9. It is here first in a passive sense, and then in *Hiphil*, as in Job xxxi. 34; and in Jer. xlix. 37,—

Be not dismayed at them,
Lest I cause thee to be dismayed before them.
or,
Be not terrified by them,
Lest I terrify thee before them.

Blayney gives to the verb first its secondary meaning, and then its primary, "Be not thou afraid of them, lest I should suffer thee to be crushed before them." How crushed before them? By whom? And to say that there is no threat included in the last line is singular, as words could hardly be framed to express it more distinctly.

The *Targum* expresses the meaning of the first line, "Restrain not thyself from rebuking them." *Grotius* renders the last line, "Ne ego te perterrefaciam coram illis—lest I terrify thee before them;" which seems to be its best rendering.—*Ed.*

[2] *Cotton*, the old translator, has rendered it very strikingly, "If thou quailest," expressing the two words in one.—*Ed.*

feet: for in case thou fearest them, thou wilt be unworthy of being supported by the strength of my Spirit."

This passage contains a useful doctrine, from which we learn that strength shall never be wanting to God's servants, while they derive courage from the conviction that God himself is the author of their calling and become thus magnanimous; for God will then supply them with strength and courage invincible, so as to render them formidable to the whole world: but if they be unhinged and timid, and turn here and there, and be influenced by the fear of men, God will render them base and contemptible, and make them to tremble at the least breath of air, and they shall be wholly broken down;—and why? because they are unworthy that God should help them, that he should stretch forth his hand and fortify them by his power, and supply them, as it has been already said, with that fortitude, by which they might terrify both the Devil and the whole world.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been once pleased to fortify thy servant Jeremiah with the invincible power of thy Spirit, —O grant that his doctrine may at this day make us humble, and that we may learn willingly to submit to thee, and so to receive and even cordially to accept what thou offerest to us by thy servant—to sustain us by thine hand, and that we, relying on thy power and protection, may fight against the world and against Satan, while each of us, in his vocation, so recumbs on thy power, as not to hesitate, whenever necessary, to expose our very life to dangers: and may we manfully fight and persevere in our warfare to the end, until having finished our course we shall at length come to that blessed rest which is reserved for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Fourth.

18. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

18. Et ego,[1] ecce posui te hodie in urbem munitionis (*vel*, munitam) in columnam (*vel*, fulturam) ferream, et in murum æneum, super totam terram, contra Reges Jehudah, contra principes ejus, contra sacerdotes ejus, contra populum terræ ipsius.

God supplies here his servant with confidence; for courage was necessary in that state of trembling which we have observed. Jeremiah thought himself unfit to undertake a work so onerous; he had also to do and to contend with refractory men, and not a few in number; for the whole people had already, through their ungodly and wicked obstinacy, hardened themselves in the contempt of God. As, then, there was no more any care for religion, and no regard manifested by the people for heavenly truth, Jeremiah could not, diffident as he was, undertake so heavy a burden, without being supported by the hand of God. For this reason, then, God now declares that he would make him like a *fortified city and an iron pillar.*[2] Indeed, the word prop would be more proper; for עמוד, *omud*, comes from the root עמד,

[1] We find here nearly the same form or mode of speech as at the beginning of the previous verse, "And I, behold I have made thee," &c.: and *Blayney* renders it so here, though not in the preceding instance.—*Ed.*

[2] There is the preposition ל before "city," "pillar," and "wall." It is an idiom. The full meaning is, "I have made thee *to be* for a fortified city." The same idiom exists in *Welsh*, the preposition *yn* is used, which implies that the verb *to be* is understood. But it is not necessary to retain the preposition in a language in which a similar idiom does not exist. The *Septuagint* render the preposition by "ὡς—as," and *Jun.* and *Trem.*, by "velut—as," or like. And such a word would be suitable in our language,—

And I, behold I have made thee this day
Like a city that is fortified,
And like a pillar of iron,
And like a wall of brass,
With regard to the whole land,
To the kings of Judah, to its princes,
To its priests, and to the people of the land.

"To" here means in opposition to—he was to stand opposed to the kings, &c., as a fortified city, &c. "Wall" is plural in the received text; but many MSS., the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, the *Targum*, and the *Vulgate*, have it in the singular number, which seems most suitable.—*Ed.*

omed; and the Prophet understands by it, not a pillar that is raised and stands by itself, but that which sustains a building or a wall. There is no ambiguity in the meaning; for God means that his servant would be invincible, and that whatever his enemies might devise against him, they would not yet prevail, as we find it said in the next verse.

Now, though this was said formerly to Jeremiah, yet godly teachers may justly apply it to themselves, who are honestly conscious of their Divine call, and are fully persuaded that they do nothing presumptuously, but obey the bidding of God. All, then, who are thus confirmed in their legitimate call from God, can apply to themselves this promise—that they shall be made invincible against all the ungodly.

But the particulars of this passage deserve to be noticed. It might have seemed enough that God called his servant a *fortified city;* but he compares him also to an *iron pillar* or column, and to a *brazen wall.* This repetition only confirms what we have explained,—that Jeremiah would be victorious, and that though Satan might rouse many to assail him, yet the issue would be prosperous and joyful, as he would fight under the protection of God.

It is at the same time added, *Over the whole land.* God doubtless speaks not of the whole world, but of the land of Judah; for Jeremiah was chosen for this purpose,—that he might bestow his labour on the chosen people. It is then said that he would be a conqueror of the whole of Judea. It then follows, *against the kings of Judah.* We know, indeed, that there was only one king in Judea; but God encourages his Prophet to be firm and persevering, as though he had said, that the course of his warfare would be long; and he said this, that he might not faint through weariness. The meaning then is, that the Prophet would not have to contend with one king only, but that as soon as one died, another would rise and oppose him; so that he was to know that there would be no hope of rest until that time had passed which God himself had appointed. We indeed know that those who are sincerely disposed to obey, do yet look for some definite period, when, like soldiers who have served their time, they may obtain a discharge; but God declares

here to his Prophet, that when he had strenuously contended to the death of one king, his condition would be nothing better; for others would succeed, with whom he would have to fight, as the same wickedness and obstinacy would be still continued. To kings, he adds *princes* and *priests;* and, lastly, the *whole people.*

When a king forgets his office and rules tyrannically, it often happens that there are moderators who check his passions, when they cannot wholly restrain them: we indeed see, that the most cruel tyrants are sometimes softened by good counsellors. But God here reminds his Prophet that the state of things in Judea would be so desperate, that ungodly and wicked kings would have counsellors endued with the same disposition. When *priests* are added, it might seem still more monstrous; but the Scripture everywhere testifies, that the Levitical priests had almost all degenerated and become apostates, so that hardly one in a hundred shewed the least sign of religion. Since, then, that order had become thus corrupt, it is no wonder that Jeremiah had to declare war against the priests; and we shall hereafter see that this was done. Now the common people might have seemed to be excusable, as there was greater simplicity among them than among the higher orders; (for they who are elevated above others transgress through pride or cruelty, and often allow themselves too much liberty, relying on their own eminence; but the common people, as I have said, seemed apparently to have more modesty;) but God here declares that impiety had so greatly prevailed in Judea, that all, from the least to the greatest, were become perversely wicked. It was, therefore, necessary, as I have before stated, that the Prophet should be fully armed; for what could he have thought, had he not in time been warned, on finding afterwards such insolence, yea, such fury in high and low, as to constrain him to contend with God's chosen people no otherwise than with devils? It afterwards follows—

19. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I *am* with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.

19. Pugnabunt autem tecum (*vel,* præliabuntur contra te,) sed non prævalebunt tibi, quia tecum ego (quia sum tecum,) dicit Jehova, ad te liberandum.

God in this verse briefly reminds his servant, that though he would be supplied with invincible power, yet he would have great trials, so that his office would not be, according to a common saying, a mere play. He then shews for what purpose he would be made like a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall, even that he might manfully fight, and not for the purpose of keeping away all dangers, and all fightings, and everything hard and grievous to the flesh. We, in short, see that the promise was given for this end,—that Jeremiah, relying on God's aid, might not hesitate to set himself against all the Jews, and that whatever might be their fury, he might still be courageous.

Now a profitable doctrine may be hence gathered, even this—that whenever God promises his servants victory over their enemies, they ought not to make this the occasion of fostering their torpidity or idleness, but, on the contrary, of gathering courage, so that they may proceed boldly and unweariedly in the course of their vocation. In short, God promises to be their deliverer, but at the same time exhorts them to resist all the assaults of their enemies.

Hence he says, *They shall fight with thee, but they shall not prevail, for I am with thee to deliver thee.*[1] From these words we see that Jeremiah was fully armed, that he might not fear on seeing dangers surrounding him; for God does not here declare that he would be like a wall to him to prevent him from being assaulted, but he says that he would deliver him; as though he had said, "Prepare thyself to suffer; for except I were thy deliverer, it would be all over with thee, and thou mightest perish a hundred times; but there is no reason for thee to fear any dangers amidst thousand deaths, since I am present with thee as thy deliverer." Now follows—

CHAPTER II.

1. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

1. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad me, dicendo,

[1] It ought to be, "For with thee will I be, to deliver thee;" for the verb *to be*, being understood, it must be put in the same tense with the other verbs in the passage: and such is the rendering of *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

2. Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

2. Vade et clama ad aures Jerusalem, dicendo, Sic dicit Jehova, Recordatus sum tui propter misericordiam adolescentiæ tuæ et dilectionem desponsationis tuæ, quum me sequuta es (quum venisti post me, profecta es post me) in deserto, in terra non seminata.

God now mentions to his servant the commands which he was to convey to the king and priests, and to the whole people; for by the *ears of Jerusalem* he means all its inhabitants. God here intimates that the Jews were unworthy of being cared for by him any more; but that he is induced by another reason not to reject them wholly, until he had found out by experience their irreclaimable wickedness. So then he makes this preface, *I remember thee for the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thy espousals.* In these words he shews that he regarded not what the Jews deserved, nor acknowledged any worthiness in them, as the reason why he was solicitous for their salvation, and endeavoured to bring them to the right way by the labours of his Prophet, but that this is to be ascribed to his former benefits.

Some render the words, "I remember the piety or kindness of thy youth;" and לְ, *lak*, may be thus taken, as it is in other places. Others omit this word; while others consider a copulative to be understood, "I remember thee, and the kindness of thy youth." But none, as I think, have attained to the meaning of the Prophet: there is yet no obscurity in the words, if a preposition be considered as being understood, so as to read thus,—that God remembered his people *for* the kindness which he had shewn to them, and for the love which he had manifested towards them from the beginning. Then the real meaning of the Prophet I think to be this,—that God here takes away every ground for pride and boasting from the Jews; as though he had said, that they were worthy, they had no reason to think; but that he was still their Father, and was therefore unwilling that the benefits he had formerly conferred upon them should be wholly lost. There is, in short, given here a reason why God sent Jeremiah after the other prophets; as though he had said, "It is a testimony to you of the paternal care which I shew to you, when I send my Prophet to

give you a hope of pardon, if ye return to the right way and be reconciled to me. But how is it that I still shew a concern for you, as ye have forgotten me, and wholly disregarded my law? It is so, because I wish to continue my favours to you." The *kindness of thy youth* he takes in a passive sense; for he does not mean that the Jews were kind or merciful, but that they had experienced the kindness of God.

But the metaphor here used must be noticed. God compares himself here to a young bridegroom, who marries a youthful bride, in the flower of her age, and in the prime of her beauty: and it is a manner of speaking commonly adopted by the prophets. I will not now detain you with a long explanation, as the subject will be treated more at large in another place.

As God, then, had espoused the people of Israel, when he redeemed and brought them out of Egypt, he says now, that he *remembers* the people on account of that *kindness* and *love*. He sets kindness or beneficence before love. The word חסד, *chesad*, properly means a gratuitous favour or kindness, which is shewn to the miserable, or beneficence. By the word love, God means in many other places the gratuitous election with which he had favoured the whole people. The expression is indeed made clearer when kindness or gratuitous favour is placed first, and then love is added: though nothing new is added, yet the Prophet more fully shews that the people had been loved by God in no other way than through his kindness.[1]

[1] Though most of modern commentators, *Grotius*, *Gataker*, *Blayney*, *Scott*, *Adam Clarke*, &c., give the same view of this verse with *Calvin*, yet the probability is, and something more than the probability, that the sense in which it was taken by the ancients is the correct one; which is the sense given in our version, and adopted by *Henry*. A literal rendering of the verse is sufficient to shew its meaning,—

2. Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying,—
Thus saith Jehovah,—
I remember, with regard to thee,
The kindness of thy youth,
The love of thy espousals,
Thy coming after me in the desert,
Through a land not sown.

"Thy coming, *or*, walking after me," stands in the same relation to "remember" as the two preceding words: this is plainly the construction; and this construction determines the meaning of the foregoing lines. Our

Now this is a remarkable passage; for God shews that his covenant, though perfidiously violated by the Jews, was yet firm and immutable: for though not all who derive their descent according to the flesh from Abraham, are true and legitimate Israelites, yet God ever remains true, and his calling, as Paul says, is without repentance. (Rom. xi. 29.) We may therefore learn this from the Prophet's words,—that God was not content with one Prophet, but continued his favour, inasmuch as he would not render void his covenant. The Jews indeed had impiously departed from the covenant, and a vast number had deservedly perished, having been wholly repudiated; yet God designed really to shew that his grace depends not on the inconstancy of men, as Paul says in another place, for it would then presently fail, (Rom. iii. 4;) and that were all men false and perfidious, God would yet remain true and fixed in his purpose. This we learn from the Prophet's words, when it is said, that God remembered the people on account of the kindness of their youth.

As to *youth* and *espousals*, we may hence learn that they had been anticipated by God's kindness; for they became in no other way connected with God than by having been chosen by him: their espousal would not have been enjoyed by the people, had not God anticipated them. What was Abraham? and what were all his posterity? God then now shews, that the beginning of all blessings, and as it were the fountain, was this,—that it pleased him to choose the people for himself.

And the same thing is confirmed in other words: *When*, he says, *thou didst follow me in the desert, in a land not*

version is quite wrong in rendering לְךָ, "thee;" it ought ever to be rendered as above, when the verb, as here, is followed by an accusative case. See Lev. xxvi. 45; Ps. lxxix. 8; cvi. 45.

What has led commentators, no doubt, to divert this passage from its right meaning was their impression that more is here ascribed to Israel than their history warrants. But this is not the only instance in which their former conduct is contrasted with their latter conduct. This is done in Mal. ii. 5, as to the priests. The object here is to set forth the difference between the people when brought out of Egypt, and following God's guidance in the wilderness, and their conduct at the time of Jeremiah. They were indeed very far from being what they ought to have been in the first instance, but their deportment in Jeremiah's age was incomparably worse.—*Ed.*

sown. The people, we know, did not obey God as they ought to have done, even when he had redeemed them. Hence God does not so much in this place commend the people for any merits of their own, but especially confirms what I have already stated,—that he could not cast aside every care for a people whom he had once adopted, and whom he had led through the desert, that they might be a people separated from the rest of the world. He however concedes to them, according to his great goodness, the praise of obedience, because they followed God through rough ways, as though a tender young woman refused not to undergo hard and irksome toils from love to her bridegroom. He afterwards adds—

3. Israel *was* holiness unto the Lord, *and* the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.

3. Sanctitas Israel Jehovæ, primitiæ frugum ejus; quicunque comederint contrahent noxam (*alii vertunt*, peccabunt; *sed ego potiùs ad pœnam refero,*) malum veniet super eos (*exegeticè additur hoc membrum*) dicit Jehova.

God here more clearly reprobates the ingratitude of the people: and first he enumerates his favours by which he had bound the people for ever to himself; and secondly, he shews how malignantly the people responded to the many blessings which they had received.

In saying, then, that Israel was *holy*, he intends it not by way of honour. It was indeed in itself an illustrious testimony to their praise, that God had consecrated that people to himself, that he designed them to be the first-fruits of his increase: but we must remember that there is here an implied contrast between this great and incomparable favour of God, and the wickedness of the people, who afterwards fell away from that God who had been so liberal and gracious to them. According to this view, then, does Jeremiah say, that *Israel was holiness* to God; that is, that they were separated from all other nations, so that the glory of God shone only among them.

He then adds, that they were the *first-fruits of his produce.* For though whatever produce the earth may bring forth ought to be consecrated to God, by whose power it grows, yet we know that the first-fruits were gathered and

set on the altar as a sacred food. As, then, God had commanded, under the law, the first-fruits to be offered to him, and then given to the priests, he says here, in accordance with that rite, that Israel were the first-fruits of his produce. For the nations, who then everywhere dwelt, were not removed from under God's government (as he is the creator of all, and shews himself to all as the Father and supporter); but he passed by other nations, and chose the race of Abraham, and for this end,—that he might protect them by his power and aid. Since, then, God had so bound the nation to himself, how great and how strong was the obligation under which that people was to him? Hence the more base and the more detestable was their perfidy, when the people despised the singular favours which God had conferred on them. We now see why the Prophet says that Israel was holy to God, and the first-fruits of his increase.

He also intimates that the time would come, when God would gather to himself other nations; for in the first-fruits the people dedicated and offered to God the whole produce of the year is included. So then Israel was like the first-fruits, because God afterwards took to himself other nations, which for many ages were deemed profane. But yet his special object was to shew that the guilt of the people was extreme, as they did not acknowledge the great favours which God had bestowed on them.

He then adds, *Whosoever will devour him shall be punished.* Of this meaning I approve, because the explanation immediately follows, *evil shall come on them.* God then means not that they should be only guilty of a crime, who should devour the first-fruits, but refers rather to punishment; as though he had said, "The profane shall not be unpunished who shall devour the first-fruits which has been dedicated to me." For if any had stolen the first-fruits, God would have executed a vengeance such as sacrilege deserved. If, however, any one prefers the other explanation,—that it would be a crime to injure Israel, or to do him any harm, because he was under God's protection, I shall not oppose him: but the wording of the sentence leads me to the other view, that is, that those who would injure Israel would not only be

guilty, but would not be able to escape God's vengeance,—and why? because *evil will come upon them, saith Jehovah.*[1] He afterwards explains more clearly the import of his doctrine—

4. Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel:

5. Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

4. Audite sermonem Jehovæ, domus Jacob, et omnes cognationes (*vel*, familiæ) domus Israel:

5. Sic dicit Jehova, Quid invenerunt patres vestri in me iniquitatis, quia alienati sunt à me, et ambulaverunt (*vel*, profecti sunt) post vanitatem, et facti sunt evanidi (*vel*, evanuerunt)?

Here God explains why he had referred to what we have noticed,—that he had consecrated Israel to himself as a peculiar people, and as the first-fruits. God often mentions his favours to us, in order to encourage our hope, that we may be fully persuaded that whatever may happen we are ever safe, because we are under his protection, since he has chosen us. But in this place, and in many other places, God recounts the obligations under which the Israelites were to him, that thence their ingratitude might become more apparent.

Hence he says, *Hear ye the word of Jehovah.* By this preface he seeks to gain attention; for he intimates that he was going to address them on no common subject. *Hear ye,* then, *O house of Jacob; hear all ye families of the house of Israel;* as though Jeremiah had said, "Here I come forth boldly in the name of God, for I fear not that any defence can be brought forward by you to disprove the justice of God's reproof; and I confidently wait for what ye may say, for I

[1] *Blayney* considers this verse as referring to Israel in ancient times, and as spoken by God: hence he renders the last words, "said Jehovah." The first part seems to declare what Israel was, and the other appears to be the language of God respecting them,—

Holy *was* Israel to Jehovah,
The first-fruits of his produce:
"All his devourers shall be deemed guilty,
Evil shall come to them," said Jehovah.

The verb אָשַׁם is rendered "πλημμιλήσουσι—shall offend," by the *Septuagint*, as in our version, and by *Grotius*; "*trespass*," by *Gataker*; and, "guilty of a trespass," by *Blayney*. The contraction of guilt is what is meant, as the punishment is announced in the next words. See Ps. cv. 14, 15.—*Ed.*

know you will be silent. I then loudly cry like a trumpet and with a clear voice, that I am come to condemn you; if there is anything which ye can answer, I give you full liberty to do so; but the truth will constrain you to be mute, for your guilt is extremely odious and capable of the fullest proof." Hence it was that he exhorted them to hear attentively.

Then follows the charge: *What iniquity have your fathers found in me*, that having forsaken *me they should walk after vanity and become vain?* Here Jeremiah charges the people with two crimes,—that they had departed from the true God, whom they had found to be a deliverer,—and that they had become vain in their devices; or, in other words, that they were become for no reason apostates: for their sin was enhanced, because there had been no occasion given them to forsake God, and to alienate themselves from him. As then God had kindly treated them, and they themselves had shaken off the yoke, and as there was no one whom they could compare with God, they could not have said, "We have been deceived,"—how so? "*For ye have*, he says, *followed vanity;* and vanity alone was the reason why ye have departed from me."[1] I wish I could proceed farther; but I have some business to which I was called even before the lecture.

[1] The literal rendering of this verse is as follows,—

5. Thus saith Jehovah,
What have your fathers found in me? Oppression?
For they have gone far from me,
And have followed after vanity,
And have become vain.

The word עול, oppression, injustice, or tyranny, is so placed in the sentence that it cannot be construed with "what." The word "vanity" means often an idol, and it is so considered here by the *Targum*, by *Piscator*, *Grotius*, *Gataker*, and others. It is often found in the plural, "vanities," as it is here in the *Septuagint;* see Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Kings xvi. 26; Ps. xxxi. 6: but it is here the poetical singular. They "became vain," that is, foolish, sottish, having no more sense or reason than their idols, as idolaters are represented in Ps. cxv. 8. Their senselessness is set forth in the next verse. An idol is especially called "vanity," because it can do no good and avails nothing: deluded imagination alone gives it all its efficacy and power. Samuel gives a true account of idols, 1 Sam. xii. 21. But as long as the devil deceives and deludes the world, idols and images will be in repute, though they are in themselves wholly useless and worthless, while yet they prove ruinous to the souls of men.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou continuest at this day, both morning and evening, to invite us to thyself, and assiduously exhortest us to repent, and testifiest that thou art ready to be reconciled to us, provided we flee to thy mercy,—O grant, that we may not close our ears and reject this thy great kindness, but that remembering thy gratuitous election, the chief of all the favours thou hast been pleased to shew us, we may strive so to devote ourselves to thee, that thy name may be glorified through our whole life: and should it be that we at any time turn aside from thee, may we quickly return to the right way, and become submissive to thy holy admonitions, that it may thus appear that we have been so chosen by thee and called as to desire to continue in the hope of that salvation, to which thou invitest us, and which is prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord. —Amen.

Lecture Fifth.

We heard yesterday God's complaint, and his expostulation with his people. He said in short, that if they came before any judge there were reasons sufficient to condemn their ingratitude, and that they were without excuse, because they had gone after vanity and were become vain; or, in other words, that they had without a cause forsaken him, and were carried away only by their own inventions. It now follows—

6. Neither said they, Where *is* the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness; through a land of deserts, and of pits; through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death; through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

6. Et non dixerunt, (*hoc est*, non cogitarunt apud se,) Ubi est Jehova, qui eduxit nos è terra Egypti, et proficisci fecit nos per desertum in terra solitaria (*vel*, vasta) et squalida, in terra horribili et umbræ mortis; in terra per quam vir non transiit, et in qua non habitavit homo?

7. And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodness thereof: but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

7. Et introduxi vos in terram fertilem, ad comedendos fructus ejus (*vel*, ad comedendum fructum ejus, *in singulari*,) et ubertatem ejus (*ad verbum est*, ad bonum ejus;) et ingressi estis et polluistis terram meam, et hæreditatem meam posuistis in abominationem.

The Prophet goes on with the same subject; for God adduces here no small crime against his people, as they had buried his favours in oblivion. Indeed, a redemption so wonderful was worthy of being celebrated in all ages, not only by one nation, but by all the nations of the earth. As then the Jews had thus buried the memory of a favour so remarkable and valuable, their base impiety appeared evident. Had they not experienced the power and kindness of God, or had they only witnessed them in an ordinary way, their guilt might have been extenuated; but as God had from heaven made an unusual display of his power, and as his majesty had been manifested before the eyes of the people, how great was their sottishness in afterwards forgetting their God, who had openly and with such proofs made himself known to them!

We now then understand what the Prophet means by saying, *they have not said:* for God here sharply reproves the stupidity of the Jews,—that they did not consider that they were under perpetual obligations to him for his great kindness in delivering them in a manner so wonderful from the land of Egypt. By saying that they did not say, *Where is Jehovah,* he intimates that he was present with them and nigh them, but that they were blind, and that hence they were without an excuse for their ignorance, as he was not to be sought as one at a distance, or by means tedious and difficult. If then this only had come to their mind, "Did not God once redeem us?" they could not have departed after their vanities. How then was it that their error, or rather their madness, was so great that they followed idols? Even because they did not choose to make any effort, or to apply their minds to seek or to inquire after God.

Here then the Prophet meets the objection of the hypocrites, who might have said, that they had been deceived, and had relapsed through ignorance; for they have ever some evasions ready at hand, when they are called to an account for their sins. But lest the Jews should make any pretence of this kind, the Prophet here shews that they had not been through a mistake deceived, but that they had followed after falsehood through a wicked disposition, for they

had wilfully despised God and refused to inquire respecting him, though he was sufficiently nigh them.

This passage deserves to be especially noticed; for there is nothing more common than for the ungodly, when they are proved guilty, to have recourse to this subterfuge,—that they acted with good intention, when they gave themselves up to their own superstitions. The Prophet then takes off this mask, and shews that where God is once known, his name and his glory cannot be obliterated, except through the depravity of men, as they knowingly and wilfully depart from him. Hence all apostates are by this one clause condemned, that they may no more dare to make evasions, as though they have been through mere simplicity deceived: for when the matter is examined, their malignity and ingratitude are discovered, because they deign not to inquire, *Where is Jehovah?*

And he afterwards adds what explains this sentence. I have said that other nations are not here condemned, but the Jews, who had known by clear experience that God was their father. As then God had, by many testimonies, made himself known to them, they had no pretext for their ignorance. Hence the Prophet says, that they did not consider where God was who *brought them from the land of Egypt, and made them to pass through the desert.* He could not have stated this indiscriminately of all nations; but, as it has been said, the words are addressed particularly to the Jews, who had clearly witnessed the power of God; so that they could not have sinned except wilfully, even by extinguishing, through their own malignity, the light presented to them, which shone before their eyes. And here, also, the Prophet amplifies their guilt by various circumstances: for he says, not simply that they had been brought out of Egypt, but intimates that God had been their constant guide for forty years; for this time is suggested by the word "desert." The history was well known; hence a brief allusion was sufficient. He, at the same time, by mentioning the desert, greatly extols the glory of God.

But the first thing to be observed is, that the Jews were inexcusable, who had not considered that their fathers had

been wonderfully and in an unusual manner preserved by God's hand for forty years; for they had no bread to eat, nor water to drink. God drew water for them from a rock, and satisfied them with heavenly bread; and their garments did not wear out during the whole time. We then see that all those circumstances enhanced their guilt. Then follows what I have referred to: the Prophet calls the desert a dry or a waste land, a *dreary land*, a *horrible land*, a *land of deadly gloom*, as though he had said, that the people had been preserved in the midst of death, yea in the midst of many deaths: for *man was not wont to pass through* that land, *nor did any one dwell in it*.[1] "Whence then," he says, "did salvation arise to you? from what condition? even from death itself: for what else was the desert but a horrible place, where you were surrounded, not only by one kind of death, but by a hundred? Since then God brought you out of Egypt by his incredible power, and fed you in a supernatural manner for forty years, what excuse can there be for so great a madness in now alienating yourselves from him?"

Now this passage teaches us, that the more favours God

[1] Though the general import of this verse is given, yet the version is not very accurate. I offer the following—

And they have not said, "Where is Jehovah,
Who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
Who led us in the wilderness,
Through a land of waste and of the pit,
Through a land of drought and of the shadow of death,
Through a land in which no man travelled,
And no human being dwelt there?"

The word "pit" is used poetically, the singular for the plural, and correctly rendered "pits" in our version. It is probably an allusion to the practice of digging pits and covering them over, in order to catch wild beasts; and the word is used here only to express hidden dangers. "The shadow of death" means a barren dreariness. After "land," in the last line but one, אשר is supplied by three MSS., and by the *Septuagint*, though by no means in character with the Greek language; but the idiom of the Hebrew requires it, and is no doubt the true reading. I have rendered אדם in the last line, after *Blayney*, "human being." The five last lines are thus given by the *Septuagint*,—

Who conducted you in the wilderness,
In a land unknown and inacessible (ἀβάτῳ,)
In a land without water and barren (ἀκάρπῳ—fruitless,)
In a land through which no man passed,
And no son of man inhabited there.

The word "barren" is rendered more literally by *Theodotion*, "σκιᾳ θανάτου—of the shadow of death."—*Ed.*

confers on us, the more heinous the guilt if we forsake him, and less excusable will be our wickedness and ingratitude, especially when he has manifested his kindness to us for a long time and in various ways.

He afterwards adds, *And I brought you in*, &c. Here Jeremiah introduces God as the speaker; for God had, as with his hand stretched forth, brought in the children of Abraham into the possession of the promised land, which they did not get, as it is said in Ps. xliv. 3, by their own power and by their own sword; for though they had to fight with many enemies, yet it was God that made them victorious. He could then truly say, that they did not otherwise enter the land than under his guidance; inasmuch as he had opened a way and passage for them, and subdued and put to flight their enemies, that they might possess the heritage promised to them. *I brought you in*, he says, into the land, *into Carmel*. Some consider this to be the name of a place; and no doubt there was the mount Carmel, so called on account of its great fertility. As then its name was given to it because it was so fertile, it is nothing strange that Jeremiah compares the land of Israel to Carmel. Some will have the preposition כ, *caph*, to be understood, "I have brought you into a land like Carmel." But there is no need laboriously to turn in all directions the Prophet's words. It is, as I think, a common noun, meaning fruitful, and used here to shew that the Israelites had been brought by God's hand into a fertile land; for its fertility is everywhere celebrated, both in the Law and in the Prophets.[1]

That ye might eat its fruit and its abundance; that is, "I wished you to enjoy the large and rich produce of the land." By these words God intimates that the Israelites ought to have been induced by such allurements cordially to serve him; for by such liberal treatment he kindly invited them to himself. The greater, then, the bounty of God towards the people, the greater was the indignity offered by their

[1] That the word means a fruitful field or country is evident from Is. x. 18; xvi. 10; Jer. iv. 26, &c. There was also a city bearing this name, situated in the tribe of Judah, Jos. xv. 55, and also a mountain belonging to the tribe of Manasseh, Jos. xix. 26.—*Ed.*

defection, when they despised the various and abounding blessings of God.

Hence he adds, *And ye have polluted my land,*[1] *and mine heritage have ye made an abomination;* as though he had said, "This is the reward by which my bounty towards you has been compensated. I indeed gave you this land, but on this condition, that ye serve me faithfully in it: but ye have polluted it." He calls it his own land, as though he had said, that he had so given the land to the Israelites, that he remained still the lord of it as a proprietor, though he granted the occupation of it to them. He hence shews that they impiously abused his bounty, in polluting that land which was sacred to his name. For the same purpose he calls it his *heritage*, as if he said that they possessed the land by an hereditary right, and yet the heritage belonged to their Father. They ought, therefore, to have considered, that they had entered into the land, because it had been given to Abraham and to his children for an heritage,—by whom? By God, who was the fountain of this bounty. The more detestable, then, was their ingratitude, when they *made the heritage* of God *an abomination.* It follows—

8. The priests said not, Where *is* the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that* do not profit.

8. Sacerdotes non dixerunt, Ubi Jehova? et qui tenebant (*vel*, servabant) legem (*ad verbum est*, apprehendentes, *vel*, tenentes legem) non cognoverunt me: et pastores perfidè egerunt mecum; et prophetæ prophetarunt in Baal (*hoc est*, per Baal,) et post ea quæ non prosunt ambulaverunt (*vel*, profecti sunt).

God assails here especially the teachers and those to whom was committed the power of ruling the people. It often happens that the common people fall away, while yet some

[1] "And ye came" is left out. The same verb in a causative sense is used at the beginning of the verse, rendered, "I brought." It would be more striking to retain the same verb, and not to use "but when" in the latter instance, as in our version,—

And I caused you to come into a fruitful land,
To eat its fruit and its rich produce;
And ye came and polluted my land,
And made mine heritage an abomination.

The whole runs thus much better, and has the conciseness of poetry: and the idea intended to be conveyed is more apparent—God caused them to come, and they came.—*Ed.*

integrity remains in the rulers. But God shews here that such was the falling away among the whole community, that priests as well as prophets and all the chief men had departed from the true worship of God, and from all uprightness.

Now, when Jeremiah thus rebukes the teachers and the priests and others, he does not excuse the common people, nor extenuate the crimes, which then prevailed everywhere, as we shall see from what follows. As many think that they set up a shield against God, when they pretend that they are not acquainted with so much learning as to distinguish between light and darkness, but that they are guided by their rulers, the Prophet, therefore, does not here cast the faults of the people upon their rulers, but, on the contrary, he amplifies the atrocity of their impiety, for they had, from the least to the greatest, rejected God and his Law. We now, then, understand the design of the Prophet.[1]

We may learn from this passage how unwise and foolish are they who think that they are in part excusable when they can say, that they have proceeded in their simplicity and have been drawn into error by the faults of others; for it appears evident that the whole community was in a hopeless state when God gave up the priests and rulers unto a reprobate mind; and there is no doubt but that the people had provoked God's vengeance, when every order, civil as well as religious, was thus corrupt. God then visited the people with deserved punishment, when he blinded the priests, the prophets, and the rulers.

Hence Jeremiah now says, that the priests did not inquire *where Jehovah was:* and he adds, *and they who keep the law*, &c. The verb תָּפַשׂ, *taphesh*, means to keep, to lay hold on, and sometimes to cover; so that there may be here

[1] It appears that the Prophet has already condemned the people in the foregoing portion of this chapter. In chap. i. ver. 18, we find the different classes thus arranged—kings and princes, priests, the people of the land. At the beginning of this chapter, he addresses the people—the whole community, and here he names the priests, and the pastors, *i.e.*, in the state, including kings and princes. Thus he reverses the order according to the common usage of Scripture: but to these are added here, prophets, because they were the spiritual pastors, as kings and princes were the civil.—*Ed.*

a twofold meaning,—that the priests kept the law,—or, that they had it shut up as it were under their keeping. It would not, however, be in harmony with the passage to suppose that the law was suppressed by them; for God, by way of concession, speaks here honourably of them, though he thereby shews that they were the more wicked, as they had no care for their office. He says, then, that they were the keepers of his law, not that they really kept the law, as though a genuine zeal for it prevailed among them, but because they professed this. They indeed wished to be thought the keepers of the law, who possessed the hidden treasure of celestial truth; for they wished to be consulted as though they were the organs of God's Spirit. Since, then, they boasted that they kept and preserved the law, the Prophet now more sharply rebukes them, because they knew not God himself. And Paul seems to have taken from this place what he says in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,—"Thou who hast the form of the law—thou who preachest against adultery, committest adultery, and thou who condemnest idols art thyself guilty of sacrilege; for thou keepest the law, restest in it, boastest in God, and with thee is understanding and knowledge." (Rom. ii. 20-22.) Paul in these words detects the wickedness of hypocrites; for the more detestable they were, as they were thus inflated with false glory; they profaned the name of God, while they pretended to be his heralds, and as it were his prophets. We now see that this second clause refers to the priests, and that they are called the keepers of the law, because they were so appointed, according to what we read in Malachi.[1]

He afterwards adds, *The pastors have dealt treacherously with God.* We may apply this to the counsellors of the king

[1] Perhaps no better word can express the verb here used than that of our version, "handle"—"they that handle the law," that is, explain and teach it. To "handle the harp," is to play on it, Gen. iv. 21; to "handle war," is to carry it on, Numb. xxxi. 27; to "handle the oar," is to ply with it, Ezek. xxvii. 29; and to "handle the bow," is either to use it, or to know how to use it, Amos ii. 15. They who handled the law were evidently those who undertook to explain and teach it to others. To lay hold on, seems to be the primary meaning of the verb, and that either for a good or a bad purpose. "The Scribes," observes *Scott*, "who undertook to expound the Scriptures, did not understand them."—*Ed.*

as well as to the governors of cities. The Prophet, I have no doubt, included all those who possessed authority to rule the people of God; for kings and their counsellors, as well as prophets, are in common called pastors.

And he says, that the *prophets prophesied by Baal.* The name of prophet is sacred; but Jeremiah in this place, as in other places, calls those prophets (contrary to the real fact) who were nothing but impostors; for God had taken from them all the light of divine truth. But as they were held still in esteem by the people, as though they were prophets, the Prophet concedes this title to them, derived from their office and vocation. We do the same in the present day; we call those bishops and prelates, and primates and fathers, who under the papacy boast that they possess the pastoral office, and yet we know that some of them are wolves, and some are dumb dogs. We concede to them these titles in which they take pride; and yet a twofold condemnation impends over their heads, as they thus impiously, and with sacrilegious audacity, claim for themselves sacred titles, and deprive God of the honour rightly due to him. So then Jeremiah, speaking of the prophets, does now point out those as impostors who at that time wickedly deceived the people.

He says that they prophesied *by Baal:* they ascribed more authority to idols than to the true God. The name of Baal, we know, was then commonly known. The prophets often call idols Baalim, in the plural number; but when Baal signifies a patron, when the prophets speak either of Baal in the singular number, or of Baalim in the plural, they mean the inferior gods, who had then been heaped together by the Jews, as though God was not content with his own power alone, but had need of associates and helpers, according to what is done at this day by those under the papacy, who confess that there is but one true God; and yet they ascribe nothing more to him than to their own idols which they invent for themselves at their pleasure. The same vice then prevailed among the Jews, and indeed among all heathen nations; for it was the plain and real confession of all, that there is but one supreme Being; and yet they had gods without number, and these all were called Baalim.

When, therefore, the Prophet says here, that the teachers were ministers of Baal, he sets this name in opposition to the only true God, as though he had said that the truth was corrupted by them, because they passed over its limits, and did not acquiesce in the pure doctrine of the law, but mingled with it corruptions derived from all quarters, even from those many gods which heathen nations had invented for themselves.

Nor does the Prophet insist on a name; for it may have been that these false teachers pretended to profess the name of the eternal God, though falsely. But God is no sophist: there is then no reason for the Papists to think that they are at this day unlike these ancient impostors, because they profess the name of the only true God. It has always been so. Satan has not begun for the first time at this day to transform himself into an angel of light; but all his teachers in all ages have presented their poison, even all their errors and fallacies, in a golden cup. Though, then, these prophets boasted that they were sent from above, and confidently affirmed that they were the servants of the God of Abraham, it was yet all an empty profession; for they mingled with the truth those corruptions which they had derived from the ungodly errors of heathen nations.

It follows, *And after those who do not profit have they gone.*[1] He again, by an implied comparison, exaggerates their sin, because they had despised him whom they had

[1] Some say that idols are referred to; and others, as *Calvin*, think that the false gods are intended: the meaning is the same; only the context seems more favourable to the latter idea. The *Septuagint* have a neuter adjective, "After what is profitless—ἀνωφελοῦς—have they gone." The verb for profit is plural; and if we take לֹא only as a negative, both the antecedent and relative are omitted: but לֹא here, and in verse 11, and in other places, is evidently a noun or a pronoun, signifying *none*, or *nothing*: and like *neb*, none, in *Welsh*, it is either singular or plural, according to the verb in connexion with it. It precedes here a verb in the plural number, and in verse 11, in the singular. The relative is often understood both in Hebrew and in *Welsh* before future verbs, and in both languages especially when the present time or act is intended. In the present instance, both languages may be considered to be literally the same. The Hebrew, word for word, may be thus rendered in Welsh:—

Arol neb a lesant y rhodiasant.
After none (who) profit have they walked.

That is, After none who can do them good have they gone.—*Ed.*

known, by so many evidences, to be their Father and the author of salvation, whose infinite power they had as it were felt by their own hands, and then they followed their own inventions, though there was nothing in all their idols which could have justly allured the people of Israel. Since, then, they followed vain and profitless deceptions, the more heinous and inexcusable was their sin. It afterwards follows—

9. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead.	9. Propterea adhuc contendam (*vel*, disceptabo) vobiscum, dicit Jehovah; et cum filiis filiorum vestrorum disceptabo.

The particle עוֹד, *oud*, yet, or still, is not without weight; for the Prophet intimates, that if God had already punished the perfidy and wickedness of the people, he still retained whole his right to do so, as though he had said, "Think not that you have suffered all your punishment, though I have already severely visited your fathers for their wickedness and obstinacy; for as ye proceed in the same course, and as there is no moderation nor limits to your sins, I will not desist from what I have a right to do, but will punish to the last both you and your children, and all succeeding generations." We now then understand what the Prophet means.

It is indeed usual with hypocrites foolishly to cast off all fear, especially after having been once chastised by the Lord; for they think it enough that they have suffered punishment for their sins; and they do not consider that God moderately punishes the sins of men to invite others to repentance, and that he is in such a way sharp and severe as yet to restrain himself, in order that there may be room for hope, and that they who have sinned, while waiting for pardon, may thus more readily and willingly return to the right way. This is what hypocrites do not consider; but they think that God on the first occasion expends all his rigour, and so they promise themselves impunity as to the future. As for instance, —When God chastises a city, or a country, with war, pestilence, or famine, while the evils continue there is dread and anxiety: most of those whom God thus affects sigh and groan, and even howl; but as soon as some relaxation takes place, they shake off the yoke, and having no concern for

their wickedness, they return again as dogs to their vomit. It is hence necessary to declare to hypocrites what we see to have been done here by Jeremiah,—that God so visits men for their sins, that in future he ceases not to pursue the same course, when he sees men so refractory as not to profit under his scourges.

Still, therefore, he says: this threat no doubt exasperated the minds of the nation: for as they dared to clamour against God, as we find in many places, and said that his ways were thorny, they spared not the prophets, and this we shall hereafter see: they indeed gave the prophets an odious character; and what? "These prophets," they said, "chatter nothing else but burdens, burdens, as though God ever fulminated against us; it would be better to close our ears than to be continually frightened by their words." It must then have been a severe thing to the Jews, when the Prophet said, *Still God will contend with you.* But it was needful so to do.

Let us then learn from this passage, that whenever God reproves us, not only in words, but in reality, and reminds us of our sins, we do not so suffer for one fault as to be free for the future, but that until we from the heart repent, he ever sounds in our ears these words, *Still God will contend with you:* and a real contention is meant; for Jeremiah speaks not of naked doctrine, but intimates that the Jews were to be led before God's tribunal, because they ceased not to provoke his wrath:[1] and he declares the same thing respecting their children and the third generation. It afterwards follows—

10. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see, and send into Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing:

10. Nempe (*vel,* nam) transite ad insulas Chittim (Græciæ, *hoc est,* ad omnes regiones transmarinas,) et videte, et in Kedar (*hoc est, in oppositam partem, nempe versus Arabiam*) mittite, et considerate diligenter, et videte, an factum sit sicut hoc (*id est,* an factum sit aliquid simile:)

[1] *Gataker* thinks that it was *verbal* pleading. "It is as if he had said, 'I have argued the case with your forefathers already, let me debate the matter a little further with you, and let your posterity also consider well what I now say,' (see Deut. xxxi. 19, 31.) And so is the same word afterwards used for debating the case or pleading, verse 29." *Henry, Adam Clarke,* and *Blayney,* take the same view; but *Scott* seems to agree with *Calvin.* The verb רוב, followed as it is here by את, ever means a *verbal* dispute or contention. See Numb. xx. 13; Neh. xiii. 11, 17; Prov xxv. 9; Is. xlv. 9.—*Ed.*

11. Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit.

11. An mutaverit gens deos, et ipsi non sunt dii? et populus meus mutavit gloriam suam in id quod non prodest.

Here, by a comparison, he amplifies the wickedness and ingratitude of his own nation,—that they had surpassed in levity all heathen nations; for he says that all nations so agreed in one religion, that each nation followed what it had received from its ancestors. How then was it that the God of Israel was repudiated and rejected by his own people? If there was such persistency in error, why did not truth secure credit among them who had been taught by the mouth of God himself, as though they had been even in heaven? This is the drift of the Prophet's meaning, when he says, *Go into the islands of Chittim, and send into Kedar.*

He mentions Greece on one side, and the East on the other, and states a part for the whole. The Hebrews, as we have seen in Daniel, called the Greeks Chittim, though they indeed thought that the term belonged properly to the Macedonians; but the Prophet no doubt included in that term not only the whole of Greece and the islands of the Mediterranean, but also the whole of Europe, so as to take in those parts, the whole of France and Spain. There is indeed some difference made in the use of the word; but when taken generally, it was understood by the Hebrews, as I have said, to include France, Spain, Germany, as well as Greece; and they called those countries islands, though distant from the sea, because they carried on no commerce with remote nations: hence they thought the countries beyond the sea to be islands; and the Prophet spoke according to what was customary.[1]

He then bids them to *pass into the islands*, southward as well as northward; and then he bids them, on the other hand, to send to explore the state of the East, Arabia as well as India, Persia, and other countries; for under the word *Kedar*

[1] *Parkhurst* doubts whether the word אִי, rendered islands, has ever strictly that meaning. He renders the singular, אִי, a settlement, a habitation, and refers to Job xxii. 30; Is. xx. 6; and says, that the plural, in Is. xlii. 15, ought to be rendered "habitable places," and not "islands," as in our version. It may be rendered here, "countries," as by *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

he includes all the nations of the East; and as that people were more barbarous than others, he mentions them rather than the Persians or the Medes, or any other more celebrated nation, in order more fully to expose the disgraceful conduct of the Jews. *Go* then, or *send*, to all parts of the world, and *see* and *diligently consider*, see and see again; as though he said, that so great was the stupidity of the Jews, that they could not be awakened by a single word, or by one admonition. This then is the reason why he bids them carefully to inquire, though the thing itself was very plain and obvious. But this careful inquiry, as I have said, was enforced not on account of the obscurity of the subject, but for the purpose of reproving the sottishness of that perverse nation, which must have been conscious of its gross impiety, and yet indulged itself in its own vices.

Hence he says, *Yea, pass over unto the islands;* and then he adds, *see whether there is a thing like this;* that is, such a monstrous and execrable thing can nowhere be found. An explanation follows, *No nation has changed its gods, and yet they are no gods;* that is, religion among all nations continues the same, so that they do not now and then change their gods, but worship those who have been as it were handed down to them by their fathers. *And yet*, he says, *they are no gods.* If it had been only said, that no nation has changed its gods, the impiety of Israel would not have been so grievously exposed; but the Prophet takes it for granted, that all the nations were deceived and led away after fictitious gods, and yet remained constant in their delusions. Now, God does not set this forth as a virtue; he does not mean that the constancy of the nations was worthy of praise in not departing from their own superstitions; but, compared with the conduct of the chosen people, this constancy might however appear as laudable. We hence see that the whole is to be thus read connectively,—"Though no nation worships the true God, yet religion remains unchangeable among them all; and yet ye have perfidiously forsaken me, and you have not forsaken a mere phantom, but your *glory.*"

He sets here the favour of God in opposition to the delu-

sions of false gods, when he says, *My people have changed their own glory.* For the people knew, not only through the teaching of the law, but also by sure evidences, that God was their glory; and yet they departed from him. It is then the same as though Jeremiah had said, that all the nations would condemn the Israelites at the last day, because their very persistency in error would prove the greater wickedness of the Jews, inasmuch as they were apostates from the true God, and from that God who had so clearly manifested to them his power.

Now, if one asks, whether religion has been changed by any of the nations? First, we know that this principle prevailed everywhere,—that there was to be no innovation in the substance of religion: and Xenophon highly commends this oracle of Apollo,—that those gods were rightly worshipped who have been received by tradition from ancestors. The devil had thus bewitched all nations,—"No novelty can please God; but be ye content with the usual custom which has descended to you from your forefathers." This principle then was held by the Greeks and the Asiatics, and also by Europeans. It was therefore for the most part true what the Prophet says here: and we know that when a comparison is made, it is enough if the illustration is for the most part, ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, as Aristotle says, confirmed by custom and constant practice. We hence see that the charge of levity against the Jews was not unsuitably brought by Jeremiah, when he said, that no nation had changed its gods, but that God had been forsaken by his people whose *glory* he was; that is, to whom he had given abundant reasons for glorying.[1]

[1] "Their glory" are by some considered to be God himself, and not the glory, that is, the honour, dignity, and greatness which he bestowed on the people, as *Calvin* here intimates: but the latter is more consistent with what follows, which literally is, "for nothing that profits:" for the לֹא here, as in verse 8, is evidently a noun, or a pronoun. The comparison here is between what God gives and what false gods give; the comparison before was between God himself and the false gods. God gives glory, renders his people great and illustrious; but the false gods give nothing that profits, that really benefits, or does any good.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast made thyself known to us in so plain a manner, not only by thy law and prophets, but also by thine only-begotten Son, that the knowledge of thy truth ought to have already struck deep roots in us,—O grant, that we may continue firm and constant in thy holy vocation, and make continual progress in it, and ever hasten forward to the goal: and do thou so humble us under thy mighty hand, that we may know that we are paternally chastised by thee, and profit under thy discipline, until being at length purified from all our vices we shall come to enjoy that immortal life, which has been made known to us by Christ, when we shall be able fully to rejoice in thee.—Amen.

Lecture Sixth.

12. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord.

12. Obstupescite cœli super hoc, et expavescite, desolamini (*vel*, arescite) valde, dicit Jehova.

When the Prophet saw that he had to do with besotted men, almost void of all reason, he turned to address the heavens: and it is a way of speaking, common in the Prophets,—that they address the heaven and the earth, which have no understanding, and leave men endued with reason and knowledge. This they were wont to do in hopeless cases, when they found no disposition to learn.

Hence now the Prophet bids the *heavens* to be *astonished* and to be *terrified* and to be *reduced* as it were unto *desolation;* as though he had said, "This is a wonder, which almost confounds the whole order of nature; it is the same as though we were to see heaven and earth mixed together." We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet: for by this representation he intended to shew, how detestable was the impiety of the people, since the heavens, though destitute of reason, ought justly to dread such a monstrous thing.

As to the words, some render them, "Be desolate, ye heavens," and then repeat the same: but as שֹׁמּוּ, *shemem*, means to be astonished, the rendering I have given suits the present passage better, "Be astonished, ye heavens, for this,"

and then, "be ye terrified and dried up;" for חָרַב, *chareb*, signifies to become dry, and sometimes, to be reduced to a solitude or a waste.[1] It afterwards follows:—

13. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

13. Certè (*vel* quia) duo mala fecit populus meus, Me dereliquerunt fontem aquarum viventium, ut foderent sibi puteos (*vel*, cisternas,) cisternas contritas (*vel*, confractas,) quæ non continent aquas.

If a reason is given here why the Prophet had bidden the heavens to be astonished and terrified, then we must render the words thus, "For two evils have my people done:" but I rather think that the preceding verse is connected with the former verses. The Prophet had said, "Go to the farthest lands, and see whether any nation has changed its gods, while yet they are mere inventions." I think then the subject is closed with the exclamation in the preceding verse, when the Prophet says, "Be astonished, ye heavens." It then follows, "Surely, two evils have my people done," even these,—"they have forsaken me,"—and then, "they sought for themselves false gods." When any one forsakes an old friend and connects himself with a new one, it is an iniquitous and a base conduct: but when there is no compensation, there is in it united together, folly, levity, and madness. If I despise what I know to be profitable to me, and embrace what I understand will be to my hurt, does not

[1] *Blayney*, following the *Septuagint*, renders the verbs as in the third person plural. "The heavens are astonished," &c.; but it is better to take them as being in the second person in the imperative mood, as both *Aquila* and *Symmachus* do. Similar passages are so construed, see Is. i. 2. There is alliteration in the two first words, as though we said in our language, "Heave, ye heavens:" and there is a gradation in the expressions —be astonished—be horrified—be wholly wasted, or consumed, or dried up,—

Astonished be ye, the heavens, for this,
And be horrified,
Be ye wholly wasted, saith Jehovah.

The alteration in the last verb, in accordance with the *Syriac*, חרדו, which means to "tremble," instead of חרבו, though proposed by *Secker* and approved by *Horsley*, is by no means necessary, and countenanced by no MSS. Nor is the emendation of *Blayney*, in conformity with the *Septuagint*, to be at all approved. These alterations are not only unnecessary, but destroy the expressive and striking character of the passage. Learned men are sometimes led too much by an innovating spirit.—*Ed.*

such a choice prove madness? This then is what the Prophet now means, when he says, that the people had sinned not only by departing from the true God, but also by going over, without any compensation, unto idols, which could confer no good on them.

He says that they had done *two evils:* the first was, they had *forsaken God;* and the other, they had fallen away unto false and imaginary gods. But the more to amplify their sin, he makes use of a similitude, and says that God is *a fountain of living waters;* and he compares idols to perforated or *broken cisterns, which hold no water.*[1] When one leaves a living fountain and seeks a cistern, it is a proof of great folly; for cisterns are dry except water comes elsewhere; but a fountain has its own spring; and further, where there is a vein perpetually flowing, and a perennial stream of waters, the water is more salubrious and much better. The waters which rain brings into cisterns are never so wholesome as those which flow from their own native vein: and when the very receptacles of water are full of chinks, what must they be but empty? Hence then God charges the people with madness, because he was forsaken, who was a fountain and a fountain of living waters; and further, because the people sought unprofitable things when they went after their idols. For what is to be found in idols? some likeness; for the superstitious think that they labour not in vain, when they worship false gods, and they hope to derive

[1] *Blayney* innovated here, because he seemed not rightly to distinguish between the two words that are here used. Both are rendered "cisterns" in our version; but they are two distinct words, though they are similar, and mean similar or the same things. The first is בארות, pits, and the other is בארת in our received text, but ought evidently to be ברות, or, as in one MS., בורת, which means "wells" or pools. The first is a feminine noun, the last is a masculine noun; and hence we find that the adjective added here to the last word is masculine, as in other places, see Deut. vi. 11; 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; Neh. ix. 25; while the first is accompanied with adjectives in the feminine gender. The verse may be thus rendered,—

For two evils have my people done,—
Me have they forsaken, the fountain of living waters;
In order to dig for themselves pits,
Broken wells, which cannot hold water.

It is singular that *Adam Clarke* should say that these cisterns were "vessels ill put together," since they were pits dug in the ground to receive rain-water.—*Ed.*

some benefit. There are then some resemblances to the true in false religions; and hence the Prophet compares false gods to wells, because they were made hollow, suitable to hold water; but there was not a drop of water in them, as they were broken cisterns.

We now perceive what the Prophet meant,—that we cannot possibly be free from guilt when we leave the only true God, as in him is found for us a fulness of all blessings, and from him we may draw what may fully satisfy us. When therefore we despise the bounty of God, which is sufficient to make us in every way happy, how great must be our ingratitude and wickedness? Yet God remains ever like himself: as then he has called himself the fountain of living waters, we shall at this day find him to be so, except he is prevented by our wickedness and neglect. But the Prophet adds another crime; for when we fall away from God, our own conceits deceive us; and whatever may appear to us at the first view to be wells or fountains, yet when thirst shall come, we shall not find a drop of water in all our devices, they being nothing else but dry cavities. It follows—

14. *Is* Israel a servant? *is* he a home-born *slave?* why is he spoiled?

15. The young lions roared upon him, *and* yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burnt without inhabitant.

16. Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.

17. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?

14. An servus Israel? An (*vel*, si) genitus domi? (*hoc est*, an verna? *accipiunt enim pueruni domi natum pro verna:*) quare factus est in prædam?

15. Super eum rugient (*vel*, rugiunt) leones (*alii vertunt*, catulos leonum, *et sæpe significat minores leones hoc nomen, sed ubi adjungitur reliquis, ubi autem solum ponitur, ego semper interpretor* generaliter pro leonibus,) miserunt vocem suam; posuerunt terram ejus in vastitatem; urbes ejus exustæ sunt (*vel*, destructæ, *nam* נ *tandem valet* atque *hoc loco*) absque habitatore.

16. Etiam filii Noph (*hoc est*, Mempheos, *vocant enim Hebræi Noph urbem quæ fuit olim metropolis Egypti*) et Thaphanes (*vel*, Thaphis, *ut vertunt Græci*) frangent tibi verticem.

17. An non hoc fuit tibi, deserere tuum, (*hoc est*, quòd deserueris) Jehovam Deum tuum, quo tempore ducebat te per viam.

These verses are to be read together; for the Prophet first shews that Israel was not as to his original condition

miserable, but that this happened through a new cause, and then he mentions the cause. He then first asks, *whether Israel was a servant or a slave?* God had adopted them as his people, and had promised to be so bountiful to them as to render them in every way happy; and what was more, as a proof of their happiness, he said, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.) We then see what was the original condition of Israel; they excelled all other nations, because they were God's peculiar people, they were his heritage, they were a royal priesthood.

Hence the Prophet, as though astonished at something new and strange, asks this question, *Is Israel a servant?* He was free beyond all nations; for he was the first-born son of God: it was therefore necessary to inquire for the cause why he was so miserable; for he says afterwards, that *lions roared against him, and sent forth their voice;* he says, that their *cities were burnt*, or destroyed; he says, that their land was reduced to desolation; and at length he adds, *Has not this done these things to thee?* This again is put as a question, but it is doubly affirmative, for it takes away every doubt: "What do you say is the cause why you are so miserable? for all are hostile to you, and you are exposed to the wrongs of all: whence can you say has all this proceeded, except from your own wickedness?" We now see what the Prophet means.

But that what he says may be more clear, we must remember that he reminds the people, by way of reproach, of the benefits which God had conferred on them. As then the children of Abraham had been honoured with so many singular favours that they had the pre-eminence over all the world, this dignity is now referred to, but only for the purpose of exposing their base conduct, as though he had said, "God did not deceive you, when he promised to be bountiful to you; his adoption is not deceptive nor in vain: hence you would have been happier than all other nations, had not your own wickedness rendered you miserable." We now see for what end the Prophet asked, *Is Israel a servant or a slave?* They were indeed on an equality with other people,

as they were by nature; but as they had been chosen by God, and as he had favoured them with that peculiar privilege, the Prophet asks, whether they were servants, as though he had said, "What is it that prevents that blessedness to appear among you, which God has promised? for it was not God's design to disappoint you: it then follows that you are miserable through your own fault."[1]

And by saying, *Why is he become a prey*, he intimates that except Israel had been deprived of God's protection, they would not have been thus exposed to the caprice of their enemies. They were not then become a prey except for this reason, because God had forsaken them, according to what is said in the song of Moses, "How should one chase a thousand, and ten should put to flight as many thousands, except God had given us up as captives, except we had been shut up by his hand." (Deut. xxxii. 30.) For Moses in that passage does also in an indirect manner remind the people how often and how wonderfully God had given them victories over their enemies, and thus he leaves it to their posterity, when in distress, to consider how the change came that one should chase a thousand; that is, how could it be, that they, possessing great forces, should yet be put to flight by their enemies; for they were not wont to turn their backs, but to conquer their enemies: it then follows, that they were

[1] The difficulty of understanding this passage has arisen from not considering the questions in a negative sense, as implying a strong denial—"Is Israel a servant (or, rather a slave)?" No, by no means. "Is he one begotten in the house," that is, in a state of bondage? No, by no means. Then the following question comes naturally; since he is neither a purchased slave, nor a slave born in the house, "why has he become a prey?" That there were two sorts of slaves of this kind is evident from many parts of Scripture. See Gen. xvii. 12, 23, 27; Ex. xxi. 4; Lev. xxii. 11. This is the view taken evidently in our version, by *Jun.* and *Trem.*, *Piscator*, *Gataker*, *Grotius*, *Henry*, and *Scott*.

Blayney renders the two first lines thus,—

Is Israel a slave? or if a child of the household,
Wherefore is he exposed to spoil?

He considers "the child of the household" to be the son and the heir, as Isaac was, and refers to Gal. iv. 7. *Horsley* coincides with him. But the *usus loquendi* gives no countenance to this view, while it confirms the other. To refer to *filiusfamilias* in Latin is to no purpose. "The child of the house," as the expression literally is, and similar phrases, ever mean in Scripture those who were born slaves in a family.—*Ed.*

made captives by God, and not by the men who chased them. So also here the Prophet shews, that Israel would not have been made a prey, had they not been deprived of God's assistance.

He afterwards adds, *Over him roar the lions.* The Prophet seems not simply to compare the enemies of Israel to lions on account of their cruelty, but also by way of contempt, as though he had said, that Israel found that not only men were incensed against them, but also wild beasts: and it is more degrading when God permits us to be torn by the beasts of the field. It is then the same, as though he had said, that Israel were so miserably treated, that they were not only slain by the hands of enemies, but were also exposed to the beasts of prey. And then he adds, *they have sent forth their voice;* which is the same as to say, that Israel, whom God was wont to protect by his powerful hand, were become the food of wild beasts, and that lions, as it were in troops, were roaring against them.

He then adds, without a metaphor, that *his land was laid waste,* and *his cities burnt without an inhabitant.* This language cannot be suitably applied to lions or to any other wild beasts; but what he had figuratively said before, he now explains in a plain manner, and says, that the land was desolate, that the cities were cut off or burnt up. Now this, as we have said, could not have been the case, had not Israel departed from God, and had been on this account deprived of his help.[1]

[1] The verse literally is as follows,—

Over him shall young lions roar;
They have uttered their voice,
And have made his land a waste;
His cities are grown over with grass,
Without an inhabitant.

The verb in the first line is future, the other verbs are in the past tense; and *Blayney* thinks that they are so put to denote the certainty of what is said, as it is often done by the prophets: and this is rendered probable by what is contained in chap. iv. 7, where the same judgment is spoken of. The verb נצתה, in the received text, ought evidently to be נצתו, according to the *Keri* and twenty MSS.; and so we find it in chap. ix. 10. Our version and *Calvin* give it the idea of "burning;" but according to *Leigh* and *Parkhurst,* its meaning is, to shoot forth, to produce grass, or to grow over with grass, as the case is with ruined cities; and the words connected with it here and in other places seem to favour this meaning. It is rendered

By way of amplification he adds, *Also the sons of Noph and of Tephanes shall for thee break the head,* or, the crown of the head. We shall hereafter see that the Israelites were wont to seek help from the Egyptians. The particle גַּם, *gam,* may be thus explained, "Not only those who have been hitherto professed enemies to thee, but even thy friends, in whose help thou didst confide, shall turn their power against thee and break for thee thy head." Some think that their degradation is here enhanced, because the Egyptians were an unwarlike people; and ancient historians say that men there followed the occupations of women; but as this is not mentioned in Scripture, and as the Egyptians are not thus spoken of in it, I prefer to follow the usual explanation,—that the Egyptians, though confederate with Israel, would yet be adverse to them, and had been so already. By the *head,* some understand the chief men among the people of Israel: but we may render it thus, *they will break for thee the head,* as we say in our language, *Ils te romperont la tête,* or, *Ils te frotteront la tête;* and this, in my judgment, is the real meaning.[1]

in our version, "laid waste," in chap. iv. 7, and "desolate" in chap. xlvi. 19.—*Ed.*

[1] There have been many expositions of this latter clause, which may be seen in the Assembly's Annotations, which were written, as to Isaiah and Jeremiah, by the learned *Gataker.* He gives the preference to the idea, that the crown of the head means the best and the principal part of the land, and to break the crown means the plunder of this portion. See Is. xxviii. 4. This seems to correspond in meaning with the previous verse. It was the opinion of *Blayney* that an allusion is prophetically made to the slaying of Josiah by the Egyptians. The words literally are,

They shall break thee, the crown of the head.

"The crown of the head" seems to be explanatory of "thee;" it might then be rendered,—

They shall break thee, *even* the crown of *thy* head.

The *Septuagint* mistook one letter for another, and took the verb to be, יְדָעוּךְ, "they knew thee," instead of יְרֹעוּךְ, "they shall break thee;" but what they made the last word to be, it is hard to know, for they rendered it, "and searched thee." The *Vulgate* has followed the *Septuagint;* and the idea is a very indecent one: and there is nothing in the context to favour it. The *Targum's* paraphrase is this, "They shall slay thy brave men, and plunder thy riches;" which countenances the idea evidently conveyed by the figurative terms of the Hebrew.

The next verse literally rendered is as follows,—

Is not this *what* thou wilt do for thyself,
By thy forsaking of Jehovah thy God,
At the time *he was* leading thee in the way?

Now follows the cause; the Prophet, after having shewn that Israel were forsaken by God, now mentions the reason why it so happened, *Has not this done* it *for thee?* Some read in the second person, "Hast thou not done this for thee?" but the meaning is still nearly the same. More probable, however, is the rendering which others have given, "Has not this happened to thee, because thou hast forsaken Jehovah thy God?" Jeremiah, in short, teaches us that the cause of all the evils was the defection of the people, as though he had said, "Thou hast concocted for thyself all this evil; then must thou swallow it, and know that the blame cannot be cast on God; for he would have been faithful to thee, except thine impiety had prevented him. God has not, indeed, chosen thee in vain, nor has he in vain preferred thee to other nations; but thou hast rejected his kindness. Thy condition then would have never been as it is, hadst thou not procured thine own ruin." How so? "Because thou hast departed from thy God."

And he further exaggerates this sin by saying, *At the time when he led thee in the way.* To lead in the way, is rightly to govern, so as to make people happy. The Prophet then shews, that the people's perfidy and defection were without excuse in rejecting the worship of their God, for they were happy during the time they served him. Had they been in various ways tempted, or tried, they might have feigned some pretence. "We thought ourselves deceived in hoping in the true God, for he concealed his favour from us; we were therefore compelled by necessity. There ought at least some indulgence to be shewn to our levity; for we could have formed no other conjecture but that God had removed far from us." The Prophet meets this objection, as he does in the fifth verse, "What iniquity have your fathers found in me?" and, as it is done in another place, "My people, what have I done

The first verb is no doubt future, whether it be rendered in the second or third person. The sentence may be rendered in *Welsh* without "Is," or the relative "what," and word for word,—

Ai nid hyn a wnai i'th hun?

And the future is understood as the present. *Blayney's* version is,

Shall not this be done unto thee,
Because thou hast forsaken Jehovah thy God,
At the time that he led thee in the way?—*Ed.*

to thee, or in what have I been troublesome to thee?" (Mic. vi. 4;) for God in that passage shews that he was prepared to defend his own cause, and to clear himself from whatever the people might object to him. So also he does in this place, "I have led thee," he says, "in the way;" that is, "Thou didst live happily under my government, and yet I could not retain thee by my goodness while I kindly treated thee; and thou knewest that nothing could be better for thee than to continue under my protection; but thou hast determined to go over into the service of idols. Now what excuse hast thou, or what pretence is left thee?" We hence see, that the sin of the people is greatly enhanced, for they were induced by no temptation or trial to forsake God, but through mere perfidy gave themselves up to idols: and a confirmation of this verse follows—

18. And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?

18. Et nunc quid tibi ad viam Egypti, ut bibas aquas Nili? et quid tibi ad viam Assur, ut bibas aquam fluminis? (*Nempe, Euphratis.*)

As I have just stated, the Prophet confirms what I said, —that the people could not ascribe the cause of their evils to others; for they ought to have imputed to themselves whatever they suffered; and at the same time their sin was doubled, because they looked here and there for vain remedies, and thus accumulated for themselves new causes of misery; for they ought to have acknowledged no other remedy for their evils except reconciliation with God. If, for instance, any one being ill knew the cause of his disease, and instead of adopting the true remedy had recourse to some vain expedients injurious to his recovery, is he not deemed worthy to die for having wilfully despised what might have healed him, and for indulging himself in what is deceptive and fallacious? The same thing does Jeremiah now reprove in the people of Israel. "If you carefully inquire," saith God, "how it is that you are so miserable, you will find that this cannot be ascribed to me, but to your own sins. Now, then, what ought you to have done? what remedy ought you to have sought, except to reconcile yourselves to me, to seek pardon from me, and to strive to correct your

wickedness? I would then have immediately healed you; and had you come to me, you would have found me the best physician. And why do you now act in a way quite contrary? for you run after vain helps; now you flee to Egypt, then you flee to Assyria; but you will gain nothing by these expedients." We now understand the object of the Prophet. For after having proved the people to be guilty of impiety, and shewn that the evils which they suffered could be ascribed neither to God nor to chance, nor to any such causes, he now shews to them, that the one true remedy was to return into favour with God; but that it was an evidence of extreme madness to run now to Egypt, and then to Assyria.

Now this reproof is supported by history; for the people had at one time the Assyrians as their enemies, and at another the Egyptians; and the changes were many. God employed different scourges to awaken the sottishness of the people; at one time, he whistled for the Egyptians, as we shall presently see; at another, he blew the trumpet in Assyria: so that the Israelites might know that they could never be safe without being under the government of God. But all these things being overlooked, such was the blindness of the people, that when they were assailed by the Assyrians, they fled to Egypt and sought aid from the Egyptians, and entered into a treaty with them; afterwards, when a change occurred, they sought a treaty with the Assyrians, and also bought it at a high price.

This madness is what the Prophet now reprobates, when he says, *What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt?* that is, "What advantage dost thou gain? How great is thy folly, since thou knowest that God is angry with thee, and that thou art suffering many evils? God is adverse to thee, and yet thou thinkest nothing of reconciliation. Thy healing has been to flee to God and to be reconciled to him; but what dost thou now do? Thou fleest to the Assyrians and to the Egyptians. How wretched is thy condition, and how great is thy folly in thus wearying thyself without any advantage!"

Now we may learn from this passage, that whenever God chastises us for our sins, we ought to seek a remedy, and not to rest in those vain comforts which Satan often sug-

gests; for such charms introduce drowsiness, and healable diseases are by such means rendered fatal. What then ought we to do? We ought, as soon as we feel the scourges of God, to seek to return into favour with him; and not in vain shall be our effort. But if we look around us in all directions for help, our evils shall not be lessened but increased. To drink the waters of the Nile, and to drink the waters of Euphrates, is nothing else but to seek aids here and there.

He indeed alludes to the legations which had been sent; for they who went to Egypt drank of the waters of the Nile, and others of Euphrates. He yet speaks metaphorically, as though he had said, "God was ready to help thee, hadst thou betaken thyself to his mercy as thine asylum; but having neglected him, thou thoughtest it more advantageous to have such aids as Egypt and Assyria could bring. Thou thus seekest drink in remote countries, while God could give thee waters." And he seems to refer to the similitude which he had shortly before used: he had called God the fountain of living waters; as though he had said, "God is to thee a refreshing and perennial fountain, and there would be abundance of waters for thee wert thou satisfied with him; but thy desire is to drink the waters of the Nile, and the waters of the Euphrates."[1] We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

[1] No doubt this is the peculiar import of the passage, as though the Prophet had said, "What good to thee is to travel to Egypt to drink the waters of Sihor, a muddy river, (as the word imports;) and what good to thee is to travel to Assyria to drink the waters of the river, while thou hast at home a fountain of living, pure and perennial waters?" So *Gataker* considers the drift of the passage:—"To drink the water of Nilus in Egypt is put here for to seek help and relief there: but he delivereth it in these terms, as if he should say, that they could have nothing to do there, or no errand thither, unless it were to drink of the puddle water of that river, when they had, or might have had, as good, yea, far better than that, nearer at hand, at home. See chap. xviii. 14; so 2 Kings i. 3." Then the plainest version would be thus,—

And now, what hast thou to do with a journey to Egypt,
That thou mightest drink the waters of Sihor?
And what hast thou to do with a journey to Assyria,
That thou mightest drink the waters of the river?

The comparison evidently is between the waters of Sihor and of the river Euphrates, and the living waters. As in other parts of Scripture the Euphrates is no doubt meant by the river, though here, as in Ps. lxxx. 11, and Isaiah vii. 20, the article ה is not prefixed to it.—*Ed.*

He, no doubt, speaks of the waters of the Nile and of the Euphrates, because both those nations abounded apparently in wealth and power and in military forces. As, then, the people of Israel trusted in such auxiliaries, the Prophet here reproves their ingratitude, because they were not content with God's help, though that was not so visible and conspicuous. God, indeed, has help sufficient for us; and were we content with him alone, no doubt an abundance of good things would to a full satisfaction be given to us; and as he is not wearied in doing good, he would supply us with whatever is desirable: but as we cannot see his beneficence with carnal eyes, we are therefore carried away after the allurements of the world. We may hence learn that we are not to seek drink either from the Nile or from the Euphrates, that is, from the enticing things of the world, which make a great show and display; but that we are, on the contrary, to drink from the hidden fountain which is concealed from us, in order that we may seek it by faith. It now follows—

19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.

19. Castigabit te malitia tua, et aversiones tuæ, (*vel,* defectiones tuæ) pœnam de te exigent; et cognosces et scies, quod malum et amarum tuum derelinquere (*ad verbum, hoc est,* quòd reliqueris) Jehovam Deum tuum, et quòd timor meus super te non fuerit, dixit Dominus Jehova exercituum.

Here again, the Prophet confirms what I have before stated,—that the people would at length find, willing or unwilling, what it was to depart from God; as though he had said, "As thou hast not hitherto learnt by so many evidences, that thy perfidy is the cause of all thy evils, God will heap evils on evils, that thou mayest at length know, even against thy will, that thou receivest a reward due to thy wickedness." This is the sum of the whole.

But he says first, *chastise thee shall thy wickedness,* as though he had said, that though God ascended not his tribunal, nor put forth his hand to punish the people, yet judgment would be evident in their very sins. And this is much more powerful, and has greater weight in it than if the Prophet had said only, that God would inflict on the people a just punishment; *thy wickedness,* he says, *shall chastise*

thee; and a similar mode of speaking is adopted by Isaiah; "Stand," he says, "against thee shall thy wickedness," (Is. iii. 9; lix. 12;) as though God had said, "If I were even to be silent and not to take upon me the office of a judge, and if there were no other accuser, and no one to plead the cause, yet stand against thee will thy wickedness, and fill thee with shame." To the same purpose is what is said here, *thy wickedness*[1] *shall chastise thee.*

But we must consider the reason why the Prophet said this. There were then, we know, complaints in the mouths of many,—that God was too rigid and severe. Since then they thus continually clamoured against God; the Prophet repels such calumnies, and says that their wickedness was sufficient to account for the vengeance executed upon them. He says the same of their *turnings aside;*[2] but what he had said generally before, he now expresses more particularly,—that the people had withdrawn themselves from the worship of God and obedience to him. He therefore points out here the kind of wickedness of which they were guilty, as though he had said that there was no need of an accuser, of witnesses, or of a judge, but that the defections of the people alone would sufficiently avail to punish them.

He afterwards adds, *Thou shalt know and see how wicked and bitter it is to forsake Jehovah thy God.* These are words hard in their construction; but we have already explained the meaning; "Thy forsaking," or thy defection, means, "that thou hast forsaken thy God." *And my fear was not on,* or, *in thee.* Here, again, the Prophet points out as by the finger the sins of the people. He had before spoken of their turnings aside; but he now mentions their defection,—that the people had plainly and openly departed from the true

[1] *Blayney* renders it "adversity." That the word sometimes means that, is true, but most commonly wickedness; and this is the sense required by the context: it must be that which corresponds in character with the word that follows—apostasy, or turning aside. "Wickedness" is the meaning sanctioned by all the early versions, as well as modern.—*Ed.*

[2] The word is singular in all the early versions. It is rendered "apostasy—ἀποστασία," by the *Septuagint,* and, "turning aside—aversio," by the *Vulgate.* Though there is no MS. in favour of the singular, yet the verb connected with it is in that number. The true reading no doubt is according to the versions, confirmed as it is by the number of the verb.—*Ed.*

God. They, indeed, ever continued some kind of worship in the Temple: but as the whole of religion was corrupted by many superstitions, and as there was no fidelity, no sincerity; and as they mingled the worship of idols with that of the true God, they had clearly departed from God, who is jealous of his honour, according to what is in the law, and allows of no rivals. (Ex. xx. 5; xxxiv. 14.) We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

He says, *Thou shalt know that it is an evil and a bitter thing*, &c. This must be applied to punishment; and he repeats what he had said before,—that the evils which the people then suffered did not happen by chance, and that as they were overwhelmed with many bitter sorrows, the cause was not to be sought afar off, for their bitterness, and whatever calamities they endured, flowed from their impiety. *Thou shalt* then *know* by the reward itself; even experience will convince thee what it is to depart from God; and he says, *from Jehovah thy God*, or, to forsake Jehovah thy God. For, if God had not made known his grace to the Israelites, their perverseness would not have been so detestable; but since they had found God to be a Father to them, and since he had so bountifully treated them, having been pleased to enter into a covenant with them, their wickedness was inexcusable.

And afterwards the person is changed, *And my fear was not in thee.* Here at length the Prophet intimates, that they were destitute of every sense of religion; for by the fear of God is meant reverence for his name. Men often fall, we know, through mistake, and are deceived by the craft of Satan; and when made thus miserable they are to be pitied. But the Prophet shews here that the people were wholly undeserving of pardon. How so? Because there was no fear of God in them. "You cannot," he says, "object and say, that you have been deceived, or make any pretence by which you may cover your wickedness: it is evident that you have acted shamelessly and basely in forsaking thy God, for there was no fear of God in you."[1]

[1] The verse literally is as follows,—

19. Chastise thee shall thy wickedness,
And thy apostasy, it shall correct thee;
Know then and see,

He subjoins at last, *saith Jehovah of hosts:* by which words the Prophet secures more authority to what he had announced; for what he had said must have been very bitter to the people: and many of them, no doubt, according to their usual manner, shook their heads; for we know how insolent were most of them. Hence the Prophet here openly declares, that he was not the author of what he had said, but only the proclaimer; that it proceeded from God, and that he had spoken nothing but what God himself had commanded.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast hitherto shewn to us so many favours, since the time thou hast been pleased to adopt us as thy people,—O grant, that we may not forget so great a kindness, nor be led away by the allurements of Satan, nor seek for ourselves inventions, which may at length turn to our ruin; but that we may continue fixed in our obedience to thee, and daily call on thee, and drink of the fulness of thy bounty, and at the same time strive to serve thee from the heart, and to glorify thy name, and thus to prove that we are wholly devoted to thee, according to the great obligations under which thou hast laid us, when it had pleased thee to adopt us in thine only-begotten Son. —Amen.

That evil and bitter *shall be*
Thy forsaking of Jehovah thy God;
And my fear *is* not in thee,
Saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

The future is spoken of. They were warned; they were to know and see, or consider, that the forsaking of God, "the apostasy," would be afflictive and bitter: and then the cause of the "wickedness" first mentioned is stated, no "fear" of God. How "wickedness" was to chastise them, and "apostasy" to correct them, is signified,—they would turn out to be "evil" —afflictive—hurtful, and "bitter"—grievous—painfully distressing. Hence *Grotius's* exposition cannot be right—"Thy wickedness shall be a proof that thou art justly punished." The reference is to the very evils and miseries to which their "wickedness" and "apostasy" would inevitably lead them. Their foreign alliances were eventually the means of their degradation and misery; and in seeking them, they forsook God as their protector; and by adopting idols, they forsook him as the object of their worship.—*Ed.*

Lecture Seventh.

20. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, *and* burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wanderest, playing the harlot.

20. Quia à seculo confregi[1] jugum tuum, disrupi vincula tua; et dixisti, Non serviam (*vel*, non transgrediar, *est enim duplex lectio;*) quia super omnem collem excelsum, et super omnem arborem frondosam tu discurristi meretrix.

As there are two readings in Hebrew, two meanings are given; for some think the verb to be, עבד, *obed*, and others, עבר, *ober*, the two letters being very similar. If we read, "I will not pass over," or, I will not transgress, the sense is, "When I broke thy yoke;" that is, "When I delivered thee from the tyranny of Egypt, then thou didst pledge thy faith to me." The covenant then made between God and the Israelites was mutual; for as God received them under his protection, when he became, as it were, their patron, so they, on the other hand, promised to submit to his authority. If we take this reading, the passage is an

[1] On the authority of the *Septuagint* and of the *Vulgate*, *Blayney* has rendered this verb and the following in the second person, "thou hast broken," &c. There is no MS. that has this reading except one, and that as to the first verb only. The *Targum* and the *Syriac* retain the first person; but the *Arabic* the second. There is no necessity of a change, as *Blayney* intimates, arising from the *usus loquendi;* see chap. xxviii. 2; Is. ix. 4. *Jerome* followed the *Septuagint;* but all modern versions have adopted the Hebrew text. *Horsley* gives this version,—

20. Verily of old time I broke thy yoke,
I burst thy bands asunder;
Yet thou saidst, I will not obey:
Verily, upon every high hill,
And under every green tree,
Thou layest thyself along, playing the strumpet.

Blayney having proposed to amend the last line, the Bishop justly says, "The text wants no correction." The verb שעה, found only here, and in chap. xlviii. 12, and in Is. li. 14; lxiii. 1, means, according to *Buxtorff* and *Leigh*, to wander, to ramble, to travel up and down, and in a transitive sense, to cause to travel, or to migrate; but, according to *Parkhurst*, to stretch out, to lie along, and transitively to cause to be stretched out, that is, to throw down. The first meaning is more suitable to the passages referred to above. It is here a participle, preceded by a pronoun, "thou," the way in which a present act is commonly expressed in Hebrew. The line may then be thus rendered,—

Thou ramblest, playing the strumpet.

The *Targum* gives the meaning, though not the right tense, "Thou didst worship idols."—*Ed.*

expostulation; as though God condemned here the people, for their ingratitude and perfidy. But the Prophet seems to mean another thing; and therefore I prefer the other reading, "I will not serve:" and yet I reject what interpreters have alleged; for this passage, I have no doubt, has been perverted. The prevailing exposition has been this, "I will not serve idols;" and they who seemed endued with some judgment did not see that this sense is unsuitable, and strained, or too far-fetched: and it may have been, and it seems to me probable, that for this reason the letter has been changed; for all gave this explanation, "Thou hast said, I will not serve idols:" but it is wholly a strained comment.

Now, on the contrary, I think that God here complains that the liberty which he had given to his people was turned into licentiousness: and this view is exactly suitable, as it is evident from the context,—*For from old time have I broken thy yoke* and *burst thy bonds: therefore thou hast said,* (the ו here is an illative,) *I will not serve;* that is, "When thou oughtest to have devoted thyself to me, who had become thy Redeemer, thou thoughtest that liberty to do thine own will was granted thee." And then the proof given of this is in every way appropriate, *for on every high hill, and under every shady tree, didst thou run here and there like a harlot.* Then God shews that his redemption had been ill bestowed on the ungodly, who made a bad use of their privilege; for hence it was that they gave themselves up to all kinds of lasciviousness.

If any one prefers the other reading, I will not contend with him; and then the sense is, "I have long ago shaken off thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou hast said, (he speaks of the people as of a woman, for the feminine gender is used; and this is done, because God sustained the character of a husband towards that people; and whenever he accused them of defection, it was as though a husband charged an unchaste wife with the crime of adultery,) *thou hast* then *said to me,* that is, promised to me that thou wouldest not transgress;" or, in other words, "thou hast promised to be faithful to me, and pledged mutual chastity."

Then the particle, כִּי, *ki*, which is commonly a causative, is to be taken here, according to its meaning in some other parts of Scripture, as an adversative, *Yet on every high hill and under every shady tree, thou didst run here and there like harlots*, who are seeking lovers.

But as I have already said, it seems to me more probable that God is here expostulating with the people, because they availed themselves of the favour of liberty as an occasion for licentiousness and wantonness: and thus the whole passage reads well, and every clause is most suitable, consistent the one with the other.

What God says, that he had *broken the yoke* and *burst the bands*, is confined by some to their first redemption: but I approve of what others say,—that the Prophet speaks here of many deliverances. We indeed know that the people were brought out of Egypt but once; but when they were afterwards oppressed, he stretched forth his hand to deliver them: God then had from old time, but at various periods, shaken off the yoke of the people; for this is evident from the book of Judges. As, then, the people were not made free, except through God's kindness, who redeemed them, ought they not to have devoted themselves to the service of their Redeemer? For on this condition, and for this end, they were redeemed by God,—that they might consecrate themselves wholly to him. God then now condemns the people for their ingratitude, because they thought that the yoke was shaken off, that they might be, as we shall hereafter find, like untameable wild beasts.

That what the Prophet means may be more evident to us, let us remember what Paul teaches us in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans,—that while we serve sin we are free from righteousness; for we go astray after our lusts, and are restrained by no bridle: but when God really sets us free from the miserable bondage of sin, we begin to be his servants, and the servants of righteousness; for being freed from sin we become the servants of righteousness: and this is the end of our redemption. But many turn the favour of God into an occasion for licentiousness, and thus abandon themselves, as though there was no law and no rule for a

holy and upright life. God complains that this was the case with the people of Israel: *Thou hast said, I will not serve.* "It is base ingratitude, that thou hast not in the first place regarded me as thy Redeemer; and that in the second place thou hast not considered that I dealt so kindly with thee for this very purpose—that thou mightest be mine: for he who has been redeemed by another's kindness is no longer his own." God had redeemed that people; and redemption brought with it an obligation, by which the people were bound willingly to submit to God as their Ruler and King. *Thou hast* then *said, I will not serve.* Thus God complains that his favour had been ill bestowed on the people, because they had abused their liberty, and turned it into lasciviousness.[1]

And the reason that is subjoined more fully explains the meaning, *for thou didst run here and there as a harlot, on every high hill and under every shady tree.* For we know that the Israelites, whenever they departed from God, had some particular places, on hills and under trees, as though greater sanctity were there than anywhere else. And at this day the case is the same with the Papists; for the devotion, or rather the diabolical madness, by which they are carried away, is of a similar kind. "O! this place," they

[1] The received Text has עָבַד, to serve, and the *Keri*, עָבַר, to transgress. In favour of the latter there are about 30 MSS., while the rest of those examined by Kennicott (in all 198, 71 examined throughout, and 127 on particular parts) retain the former verb, and also all the early versions, the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, the *Arabic*, and the *Vulgate*. The *Targum* only has the latter. *Piscator*, *Jun.* and *Trem.*, *Capellus*, *Blayney*, and *Horsley* decide with *Calvin* in favour of the former; while *Munster* and *Gataker* side with our version and that of *Geneva*, in which the latter has been adopted. Clearly the former has the weight of authority: and the contrast, too, is striking, "I have broken thy bonds of slavery; but thou hast refused to serve or obey me." The former part of this verse is of the same purport with verse 6th, and the latter with verse 25th. The verse begins with כִּי, rendered "for" in our version, by *Calvin*, and many others, but "surely" by *Blayney*, and "verily" by *Horsley*. It is omitted in the *Vulgate*. Were it rendered "though," the meaning would be more evident,—

Though from old time I had broken thy yoke,
I had burst thy bands asunder;
Yet thou hast said, "I will not obey:"
For on every high hill and under every green tree
Thou ramblest, playing the strumpet.—*Ed.*

say, "is more favourable to devotion than another; there is in it more sanctity." Of the same opinion were the Israelites: for they thought that they were nearer heaven when they went up to a mountain; they also thought that they had a more familiar intercourse with God when concealed under shady trees. And we see that the same folly has ever bewitched all heathen nations: for they imagined that God was nigher them on hills, and thought that there was some hidden divinity in fountains and under the shades of trees. As, then, this superstition had long prevailed among the Israelites, God here reproves them, because they *ran here and there.*

But we must further notice the comparison: he says, that they were like harlots, who, having cast off all shame, run here and there, not only because they burn with insane lust, but are also carried away by their own avariciousness. *Thou, harlot,* he says, *didst run here and there* on all the high hills, and under all the shady trees; as though he had said, "This is what I have effected in delivering thee! thou thinkest that unbridled liberty has been granted thee! Hence, then, it is that thou art become so wanton as to follow thy base lusts." It follows—

21. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?

21. Et ego plantavi te vineam electam (vineam nobilem, *vel,* exquisitam, *hoc enim significat nomen,* שורק,) totam fidele semen (*hoc est,* semen probum); et quomodo conversa es mihi degenerationes vitis alienæ?

God here confirms what is said in the last verse; for he condemned the Israelites for having perversely run here and there after their superstitions, when yet they had been redeemed for this end,—that they might be ruled by the hand of God. Hence he says, *I planted thee as a choice vine;* that is, "When I redeemed thee from thine enemies, I did not give thee permission thus to prostitute thyself without any restraint, without any shame; for I planted thee as a choice vine."

The metaphor is well known, and often occurs; for God frequently compares his Church to a vine. He calls it generally his heritage, or his land; but as vines excel other pos-

sessions, (for they are usually preferred to pasture lands, or to cultivated fields,) as then vines are the most valuable property, God hereby testifies how highly he values his Church; for he calls it his vine rather than his pasture or his field, when he speaks of it. So he does in this place, "I did not deliver thee from Egypt, that I might afterwards throw aside every care of thee; but my purpose was, that thou shouldest strike roots, and become an heritage precious to me, as an exquisite and a noble vine. *I*, therefore, *planted thee a generous vine*, שׂורק, *shurek*, that thou mightest bring me forth fruit."

Then he says, *a wholly right seed*;[1] that is, "I planted thee for this end,—that thou mightest produce fruit acceptable and pleasant to me." God regards here his own grace, and not the character of the people; for that people, as it is well known, was never a true seed: but God here shews the purpose for which he had redeemed the people, which was, that they might be like a choice vine. *How then?* he adds. God speaks here of their corruptions with wonder, for the indignity was such as was enough to astonish all men: *how then art thou turned to me into degenerations!* So I render סוריים, *surim*, though the word is not in common use in Latin: but it is enough for me if we understand the meaning of the Prophet. The word is derived from סור, *sur*, to turn aside, or back. We ought to say then correctly, "into turnings aside." But as this would be obscure, when the vine is spoken of, I have not hesitated to fix on another word: *How then art thou turned to me into the degenerations of a strange vine!* Some give this version, "into useless branches of grapes:" but I know not whence they have taken the words. I wish to keep to what is more genuine,—that the vine, which ought to have been fruitful, had so degenerated that it produced nothing, as we shall find in

[1] The word means not only the seed of vegetables, but whatever forms that from which anything grows. It is applied as a verb to the planting of shoots or cuttings in Is. xvii. 10. The proper rendering here would be,—

The whole of it a genuine plant (or shoot).

What is rendered "choice vine," שׂורק, is the yellow vine; the best was so called, because it produced wine of that colour.—*Ed.*

another place, but wild grapes.[1] And he calls them the turnings aside of a strange vine, which ceases to be the choice vine, שׂוֹרֵק, *shurek*, and is turned to a wild vine, which produces nothing but sour or bitter fruit: and in the last place, as it brought forth nothing useful, God justly calls it a strange vine. It follows—

22. For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, *yet* thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.

22. Etiam si laveris te nitro (*ut vertunt,*) et multiplicaveris tibi borith (*alii exponunt,* herbam fullonum; *alii,* saponem; *quod ad rei summam spectat, nulla est ambiguitas, quoniam intelligit Deus nullo artificio, nullis herbis posse maculas populi purgari,*) impressa est (*vel,* insculpta est, *vel,* signata, *ut alii vertunt*) iniquitas tua coram facie mea, dicit Dominus Jehova.

We have already seen, and the Prophet will often repeat the same thing,—that the people were become so refractory that they would not willingly give way to any reproofs; for they were almost all of such a hard front, and so obdurate in their wickedness, that they dared insolently to raise objections against the prophets, whenever they severely reproved them: "What! Are not we God's holy people? Has he not chosen us? Are we not the holy seed of Abraham?" It was therefore necessary for the prophets to apply a hard

[1] Much difference exists as to the literal meaning of this clause, though the general meaning is quite evident. None of the early versions are the same. The word סוּרִי is rendered, "into bitterness—*εἰς πικρίαν*," by the *Septuagint;* "thou hast rebelled," by the *Syriac;* "into what is corrupt —in pravum," by the *Vulgate;* "thou hast declined from my fear," by the *Targum. Blayney* takes it as a verb in the imperative mood, and renders the two lines thus,—

Yet how I find thee changed!
Depart, O vine of spurious growth.

But there is a harshness and incongruity in this version that renders it inadmissible. Besides "vine of spurious growth" is not the meaning of the words used, for it is "a foreign vine," that is, a heathen vine; which contains an allusion to the idolatry which had been imported from heathen nations.

It is most probable that סוּרִי, or in full, סוּרִים, means degenerate shoots or branches, as *Parkhurst* thinks. To turn aside, to decline, to degenerate, seems to be the most common meaning of the verb. There would in this case be a congruity in the whole verse,—

And I myself had planted thee a choice vine,
The whole of it a genuine plant;
How then art thou become to me
The degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?

The plant was of the best kind, but the shoots or the branches had become degenerated, such as a foreign or heathen vine produced.—*Ed.*

wedge to a hard knot, as they commonly say. As, then, the Israelites were like a knotty wood, it was necessary to strike hard their obstinacy.

On this account Jeremiah now says, *Even if thou wert to wash thyself with nitre, and multiply to thee borith, yet thine iniquity would be before me marked;* that is, "Ye effect nothing when ye set forth various pretences for the sake of exercising your impiety: wash yourselves, but your iniquity remains marked before me." The Prophet speaks in the person of God, that he might add more weight to the denunciation he pronounced on the Israelites, and by which he reduced to nothing their self-flatteries, according to what has been already stated.

By nitre and borith they removed stains in cloth; and hence borith is often mentioned in connection with fullers. But there is no need of a laborious inquiry, whether it was an herb or dust, or something of that kind; for as to what is meant, it is generally agreed that the Prophet teaches us by this metaphor,—that hypocrites gain nothing by setting up their pretences, that they may escape, when God condemns them. Hence he says, that all their attempts would be vain and fruitless. How so? Because their iniquity remained unwashed; that is, because they could not remove by washing what is imprinted. Spots or stains can indeed be cleansed or washed away by soap or other things; but when the stain is inward, and imprinted within, washing will avail nothing, for the marks are so deep that some more efficacious remedy must be adopted. So now the Prophet says, that the stains were imprinted, and therefore could not be washed away or cleansed by soap or borith.[1]

But the Prophet says, that the *stains were marked*, or stamped, *before* God; for it was a common thing with the Israelites to clear themselves from every blame; nay, so great was their audacity, that they openly opposed the prophets, as though some great wrong was done to them; and

[1] What we call "nitre" is different from the "nitron" here mentioned. The verb, from which the noun is derived, means to loosen, to set free: and hence the article called nitron dissolves in water, and loosens and washes away spots and stains. *Borith* was an herb, which, being burnt, and its ashes dissolved in water, had a strong cleansing power.—*Ed.*

they called the prophets accusers and slanderers. Hence he says, *Thine iniquity is stamped before me*;[1] that is, "However thou mayest by self-flatteries deceive thyself, and hidest thy sins before the world, yet thou gainest nothing; for in my sight thine iniquity ever remains *stamped.*" He afterwards adds—

23. How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: *thou art* a swift dromedary traversing her ways.

23. Quomodo dices (*hoc est*, quomodo dicis; *nam futurum tempus sæpe accipitur apud Hebræos pro actu continuo*, quomodo *igitur* dicis) non sum polluta, post Baalim non profecta sum? Vide vias tuas in valle, cognosce quid feceris dromedaria velox corripiens vias suas (*vel*, circumiens, *nam deducitur vox ista à corrigia calceamenti*).

Jeremiah goes on here with his reproof, and dissipates the clouds of hypocrites, under which they thought themselves to be sufficiently concealed: for hypocrites, when they allege their fallacious pretences, think themselves already hidden from the eyes of God and from the judgment of all men. Hence the Prophet here sharply condemns this supine self-security, and says, How darest thou to boast that thou art *not polluted?* How darest thou to say, that thou hast *not walked after Baalim?* that is, after strange gods. I have already said, that by this word were meant inferior gods: for though the Jews acknowledged one Supreme Being, yet they sought for themselves patrons; and hence arose, as it is usual, a great number of gods. The superstitious never lapsed into that degree of impiety and madness, but that they ever confessed that there is some supreme Deity; but they added some inferior gods. And thus they had their Baalim and patrons, like the Papists, who call their patrons

[1] The verb rendered "stamped" is only found here in Niphel, but, as a participal noun, it seems to mean gold stamped or marked to shew its genuineness. See Ps. xlv. 9; Prov. xxv. 12. A stain or spot is not what it signifies, as given by the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate*, nor "blot," according to *Blayney;* but it refers to the stamp or mark imprinted on a hard metal, such as gold: and this idea alone corresponds with the other parts of the verse. A stain, a spot, or a blot, might be cleansed by abstergents, but not a mark stamped on a metal,—

But thou washest thyself with nitron,
And multipliest for thyself fuller's ashes:
Stamped is thine iniquity before me,
Saith the Lord Jehovah.—*Ed.*

saints, for they dare not in their delusions to call them gods. Such was the sophistry of the Jews.

How then, he says, canst thou excuse thyself, and say, that thou hast *not walked after Baalim? See*, he adds, *thy ways, see what thou hast done in the valley*, and *know* at length that thou hast been like a *swift dromedary*. The Prophet could not have fully expressed the furious passions which then raged in the Jews without comparing them to dromedaries: and as he addresses the people in the feminine gender, the female dromedary is mentioned. I consider that she is called swift, not only on account of the celerity of her course, but on account of her impetuous lust, as we shall presently see.

Now this passage teaches us, that the people had become so hardened, that they insolently rejected all reproofs given them by the prophets. Their impiety was openly manifest, and yet they ever dared to allege excuses, for the purpose of shewing that the prophets unjustly condemned them. Nor are we to wonder that such contumacy prevailed in that ancient people, since at this day we find that the Papists, with no less perverseness, resist the clear light of truth. For however gross and shameful their idolatry appears, they yet think that they evade the charge by merely saying, that their statues and images are not idols, and that the people of Israel were, indeed, condemned for inventing statues for themselves, but that they did this, because they were prone to superstition. Hence they cry against us, and say, that the worship which prevails among them is unjustly calumniated. We see, and even children know, that under the Papacy every kind of superstition prevails; and yet they seek to appear innocent, and free from every blame. The same was the case formerly: and as the temple continued, and the people offered sacrifices there, and as some kind of religion remained, whenever the prophets reproved the impious corruptions, which were blended with and vitiated the pure worship of God, and which were called adulteries, as they everywhere declare, "What!" they said, "Do we not worship God?" This very perverseness is what the Prophet now condemns by saying, *How* darest thou to *say*, I *am not*

polluted, I have not walked after Baalim? So the Papists say at this day, "Do we not believe in one God? Have we devised for ourselves various gods?" Yet they rob God of all his power, and dishonour him in a thousand ways: and at the same time they assert against us, with a meretricious mouth and an iron front, that they worship the one true God.[1] The case was exactly the same with the Jews: but the Prophet here proves their boasting to be vain and grossly false, *See*, he says, *thy ways in the valley; see what thou, a swift dromedary, hast done.* As they could not be overcome by reasons, their wilfulness being so great, the Prophet compares them to wild animals: "Ye are," he says, "like lascivious dromedaries, which are so carried away by lust, that they forget everything while pursuing their own courses." It follows—

24. A wild ass used to the wilderness, *that* snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure: in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.

24. Onager (*sed adhuc retinet fœmineum genus*, fœmina *igitur* onagri) assueta deserto, in appetitu animæ suæ (*hoc est*, pro desiderio, *vel*, cupidine animæ suæ) colligens ventum occasionis suæ (*vel*, occursus sui) quis inde reducet eam? Quisquis persequitur eam non fatigabitur, in mense suo inveniet eam.

As Jeremiah had called the people a dromedary, so he now calls them a wild ass: "Thou," he says, "art both a dromedary and a wild ass." For when a wild ass has caught the wind according to her desire, that is, when she has pantingly sought it, and has caught the wind of her occasion, that is, such as may chance to be; for he meant to shew, by this expression, that there is no choice made by beasts, no judgment shewn, no moderation exercised;—when, therefore, she has *caught the wind*, wherever chance may take her, no one can *restrain her from her impetuous course;* and he who pursues her will *in vain fatigue himself, until he finds her in her month.*

[1] "The Jews, it seems," says *Lowth*, "had found out distinctions, whereby to reconcile the worship of the true God with those religious rites which they paid to the deities of the heathen, called here Baalim. These, they pretended, were only inferior demons or spirits, or the souls of men departed, and might be worshipped in subordination to the supreme God." *Scott* adds to this quotation this just remark, "This, and nothing better, can the Papists urge in excuse of their manifest idolatry in worshipping saints and angels."—*Ed.*

By these words the Prophet intimates the untameable madness of the people, that they could not by any means be restrained, being like a wild ass, which cannot be tamed nor divested of its wildness, especially when she has caught the wind. For were she shut in, bolts might do something, so as to prevent her headlong course: but when a wild ass is free, and allowed to ramble over hill and dale, when she catches the wind, and catches it according to her desire; that is, when she can wander here and there, and nothing prevents her from rambling in all directions,—when such a liberty is allowed to wild animals that they catch the wind, and the wind of occasion; that is, any wind that may chance to be, there is no reason, as the Prophet seems to intimate, in wild beasts, nor do they keep within any due bounds. When any one of us undertakes a journey, he inquires how far he can go in one day, he avoids weariness, and provides against it as far as he can, and after having fixed the extent of his journey, he thinks of a resting-place; and he also makes inquiries as to the right way, and the best road. The case is different with wild animals; for when they begin to run, they go not to Lyons or to Lausanne, but abandon themselves to a blind impulse: and then when they are fatigued, they cease not to proceed in their course, for lust hurries them on. We now perceive the design of the Prophet.

He then adds, *Who can bring her back?* As though he had said, that the people could not be stopped or brought back to anything like moderation, for a wildness, yea rather a complete madness, had taken an entire possession of them.[1]

[1] The grammatical anomalies at the beginning of this verse are satisfactorily removed by *Parkhurst*, and what he has proposed is approved by *Horsley*. He considers פרה to be the female dromedary, he derives למד from מד, measure, or extent, with a ל prefixed, and regards נפשה as the true reading, being that of the *Keri*, and of the largest number of MSS. This verse and the preceding are to be thus connected,—

23. How canst thou say, "I have not been polluted,
After Baalim have I not walked!"
See thy way in the valley,
Know what thou hast done,—
Like a swift dromedary which winds about her courses,—
24. A female *which*, in the wide space of the wilderness,
Through the desire of her natural instinct,
Snuffs up the wind she meets with:

It afterwards follows, *There is no reason for any one to weary himself, he will at length find her in her month.* All interpreters agree that this month is to be taken for the time of foaling. When the wild asses are in foal, and the time of parturition draws nigh, they are then restrained by their burden, and may be easily caught, as they retain not their previous swiftness, for they carry a burden. The Prophet then says, that the people were like wild asses, for they could be restrained by no instruction, and nothing could bridle their excesses; but that the time of parturition must be waited for.

Let us now see how this similitude applies to the people. The verse contains two parts. The first shews, as I have already said, that the people could not be turned by any warnings, nor would they obey any counsels, but were carried away by their insane passions, as it were by the wind of occasion, or any wind that might blow. This is the first part. Now as the obstinacy of the people was so great, God here declares to hypocrites, that the time would come when he would put a restraint on them, and break down their impetuous infatuation. How? The time of parturition would come; that is, "when ye shall have done many iniquities, your burden will stop and restrain you." And he intimates, that it would be the time of his judgment; as though he had said, "you must be dealt with not as sane men, endued with a sound mind; for ye are wild beasts which cannot be tamed." What, then, remains to be done? As the wild ass is weighed down with her burden when the time of parturition approaches, so I will cause you at length to feel the burden of your iniquities, which will be by its weight intolerable; and though your perverseness is untame-

> Who can turn her back? All who seek her,
> Let them not weary themselves;
> In her month they shall find her.

By "winding about her courses," or tracks, or ways, is meant running in this and in that direction, and not in a straight course. The word, as a noun, denotes the string or latchet by which the ancients fastened their sandals, and which they *twined* round the feet. "The wind she meets with," is literally, "the wind of her meeting." The *Septuagint* and the early versions have departed widely from the original; the *Vulgate* comes nearest to it; nor is the *Targum* far off.—*Ed.*

able, yet my hand will be sufficient to restrain you; for I shall break you down, as ye will not bend nor obey my instruction." We now, then, understand the import of the similitude, and how applicable it was to the case of the people; the use of which ought to be learnt, also, by us in the present day. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that, as it pleased thee, when thou didst deliver us from the tyranny of Satan, to lay on our necks thy yoke:—O grant, that we may be influenced by the spirit of docility, and of obedience, and of meekness, and willingly submit ourselves to thee through the whole course of our life, so that thou mayest gather from us the fruit of thy redemption: and may we so renounce sin that we may devote ourselves to thy service, and become the servants of righteousness, until having finished the course of our warfare, we shall be gathered into that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Eighth.

25. Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst; but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.

25. Prohibe pedem tuum à discalceare (*hoc est*, ne discalceeris) et guttur tuum à siti (*quanquam alii existimant esse nomen substantivum* חָדַל, *et mihi placet; ita vertendum erit*, Prohibe pedem tuum à discalceatione et guttur tuum à siti;) et dixisti, Actum est; non, quia dilexi alienos, et post illos ambulabo.

THE words of the Prophet, as they are concise, may appear at the first view obscure: but his meaning is simply this,—that the insane people could by no means be reformed, however much God might try to check that excess by which they were led away after idols and superstitions. In the first clause, God relates how he had dealt with the people. All the addresses of the prophets had this as their object—to make the people to rest contented under the protection of God. But he employs other words here, *Keep thy foot*, he says, *from unshodding, and thy throat from thirst.* For whenever there was any danger they ran, now to Egypt, then to Assyria, as we have already seen. Hence God com-

plains of their madness, because they obeyed not his wise and salutary counsels. Had God bidden them to run here and there, either to the east or to the west, they might have raised an objection, and say, that the journey would be irksome to them; but he only commanded them to remain still and quiet. How great, then, was their madness, that they would not with quietness wait for the help of God, but weary themselves, and that with no benefit? Isaiah says nearly the same thing, but in other words; for he expostulated with them, because they underwent every kind of weariness, when they might have been protected by God, and be in no way wearied.

We now, then, comprehend the design of the Prophet: for God first shews that the people had been admonished, and that in time; but that they were so taken up with their own perverse counsels, that they could not endure the words of the prophets. It was the highest ingratitude in them, that they refused to remain quiet at home, but preferred to undergo great and severe labours without any advantage, according to what is said by Isaiah in another place, "This is your rest, but ye would not." (Is. xxx. 15.) There is no one who desires not rest and peace; nay, all confess that it is the chief good, which all naturally seek. The Prophet says now, that it was rejected by the people of Israel. It hence follows, that they were wholly insane, for they had lost a desire which is by nature implanted in all men. The Prophet, then, does not here simply teach, but reminds the Jews of what they had before heard from Isaiah, and also from Micah, and from all the other prophets. For God had often exhorted them to remain quiet; and the Prophet now upbraids them with ingratitude, because they gave way to their own mad folly, and rejected the singular benefit offered them by God.

Let us then know that the Prophet states here what others before him had taught, *Keep back*, he says, *thy foot from unshodding*. Some render the last word, "from nakedness," because they wore out their shoes by long journeys; but this I think must be understood of what was commonly done, for they were wont to make journeys unshod: *keep*

then *thy foot from being unshod,*[1] *and thy throat from thirst.* We know that thirst is very grievous to men: hence the Prophet here reproves the madness of the people,—that they were so seized with the ardour of an impious passion, that they wilfully exposed themselves to thirst even by long journeys. As then God required nothing from the people but to ask his counsel, their sin was doubled by their unwillingness to obey his salutary direction. A plausible excuse, as I have already said, might have been alleged, had God dealt in a hard and severe manner with the people; but as he was ready kindly and graciously to preserve them in a complete state of quietness, no kind of excuse remained for them.

It then follows, *Thou hast said, There is not a hope, no.* The Prophet shews here, as to the people, how perverse they were; for they obstinately rejected the kind and friendly admonitions which had been given them. They say first, *There is not a hope*, or, it is all over; for אָיַשׁ, *iash*, in *Niphal*, means to despair, or, to be out of hope. It may be rendered, "It is weariness;" and this would not be unsuitable, if taken in this sense, "I have thoughtlessly tormented myself more than enough, so that weariness itself induces me to rest." *No.* The Prophet speaks concisely in order to express more strikingly the refractory conduct of the people. By saying, "There is not a hope," it is the same as though he had said, that they spurned all exhortations; and then he adds, *No.* There is no verb put here; but an elliptical expression, as I have said, is more forcible to set forth the ferocity of the people.[2]

[1] That the word means to be barefooted, or without shoes, is clear from Is. xx. 2-4, and also from 2 Sam. xv. 30: and it is nowhere else found except here. It being here a noun, it signifies literally barefootedness. They are here exhorted not to travel for aid to foreign lands, so as to wear out their shoes and thus become barefooted. This was said in contempt, in order to pour ridicule on their folly in seeking foreign aid.—*Ed.*

[2] It has been disputed whether the negative "no," refers to the advice given at the beginning of the verse, or to the immediately preceding word. The latter is the most natural. The word נוֹאָשׁ is a particle, as in Job vi. 26. The verse may be thus rendered,—

25. Keep thy foot from being bare
And thy throat from thirst;
But thou hast said, "Hopeless! No;
For I have loved strangers,
And after them will I go."

Isaiah expostulated with them in another way, and blamed them, because they did not say, "There is not a hope." (Is. lvii. 10.) Thus Isaiah and Jeremiah seem to be inconsistent; for our Prophet here reproves the people for saying, "There is not a hope;" and Isaiah, for not having said so. But when the Jews expressly answered, according to this passage, "There is not a hope," they meant that the prophets spent their labour in vain, as they were determined to follow their own course to the last. Hence by this expression, "There is not a hope," is set forth the extreme perverseness of the people; and he shews that no hope of repentance remained, since they said openly and without any evasion that it was all over. But Isaiah reproved the people for not saying, that there was not a hope, because they did not acknowledge after long experience that they were proved guilty of folly: for after having often run to Egypt and then to Assyria, and the Lord having really taught them how ill-advised they had been, they ought to have learnt from their very disappointments, that the Lord had frustrated their expectations in order to lead them to repentance. Justly then does Isaiah say, that the people were extremely besotted, because they ever went on in their blind obstinacy, and never perceived that God did set many obstacles in their way, in order to compel them to go back and to cast aside all their vain hopes, by which they deceived themselves. We hence see that there is a complete agreement between the two prophets, though their mode of speaking is different.

Jeremiah then introduces the people here as saying ex-

The first part implies that they were pursuing a useless course. The insolent answer was, "Is it hopeless? By no means." The *Septuagint* omit the negative, and have only "ἀνδρισθήσομαι—I will act manfully;" and this version has been followed by the *Syriac* and *Arabic*. The *Vulgate* has, "desperavi, nequaquam faciam—I have despaired, I will by no means do *so*." The most literal rendering is given above, and affords the best and the most suitable meaning.

To confess that it was a hopeless thing to attempt to reform them, is not so appropriate, as to deny it to be hopeless to have recourse to foreign alliances: which seems to be the import of the passage. This is the view which *Gataker* seemed most inclined to take; and he mentions this rendering, "Should I despair? No." To the same purpose is the version of *Jun.* and *Trem.* But *Grotius*, *Henry*, and *Adam Clarke*, agree with the explanation of *Calvin*.—*Ed.*

pressly, and thus avowing their own perverseness, *There is not a hope;* as though they said, "Ye prophets do not cease to stun our ears, but vain and useless is your labour; for we have once for all made up our minds, and we can never be brought to revoke our resolution." But what does Isaiah say? He reproves the madness of the people, that having been so often deceived by the Egyptians as well as by the Assyrians, they did not understand that they ought by such trials and experiments to have been brought back to the right way, but continued obstinately to follow their own wicked counsels. As to the passage before, we perceive what the Prophet means,—that God had kindly exhorted the Jews to rest quiet and dependent on his aid; but that they were not only stiff-necked, but also insolently rejected the kindness offered to them.

It then follows, *For I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* Here he exaggerates the sin of the people, for they gave themselves up to strangers; and he retains the similitude which we have already observed. For as God had taken the people under his own protection, so the obligation was mutual: both parties were connected together as by a sacred bond, as the case is between a husband and his wife; as he pledges his faith to her, so she by the law of marriage is bound to him. Jeremiah here retains this similitude, and says that the people were like the basest strumpet, for they would not hear the voice of their husband, though he was willing and anxious to be reconciled to them. Now, a wife must be wholly irreclaimable when she spurns her own husband, who is ready to receive her into favour, and to forgive her all the wickedness she may have done. The Prophet then shews, that there was in the people so great and so hopeless an impiety, that they closed their ears against God who kindly exhorted them to repent; and worse still, they shamelessly boasted that they were resolved to worship idols and their own fictions, and to reject the only true God. It follows—

26. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets.

26. Sicut pudor (*vel*, probrum) furi, cum deprehensus est, ita pudefacti sunt domus Israel, reges eorum, principes eorum, et sacerdotes eorum et prophetæ eorum.

Some render the words in the future tense, "So ashamed shall be the house of Israel," &c.; and they think that the Prophet is speaking here of the punishment which was impending over the people: but I explain the words as they are,—that the impiety of the people was so gross, that there was no need formally to prove it, as it was so very palpable. Hence the Prophet compares the Jews to open thieves, as though he had said, that hypocrites among that people gained nothing by their evasions and subterfuges, for their impiety was quite public: they were like a thief when caught, who cannot deny nor hide his crime. Hence he says that they were caught, as they say, in the very act; that is, their flagitious deeds were so conspicuous, that whatever objections they might raise, they could not clear themselves, but their baseness was known to all. We now then perceive what the Prophet means. We have before seen that the people had recourse to many excuses, but Jeremiah shews here, that they attained nothing by their evasions, except that they more fully discovered their own effrontery, for their dishonesty was evident to all; it was so manifest that they could not cover it by any cloaks and pretences.[1]

[1] The verb rendered "is ashamed," is in the past tense in Huphal, and means "made ashamed," or, "confounded," as rendered by the *Targum* and the *Vulgate*. The *Septuagint* have converted it into the future tense, and so have the *Syriac* and the *Arabic*, which have been followed by most modern versions, and by commentators. If we rightly view the whole passage, we shall see reason to take this verb as we find it, in the past tense. The verse is an answer, as it were, to what is contained in the latter part of the previous verse, by a reference to what had already taken place as to the people of Judah; and the 30th verse countenances the past tense. This and the following verse may be thus rendered,—

26. As a thief is ashamed when he is found out,
So made ashamed have been the house of Israel,
They, their kings, their princes,
Their priests and their prophets;
27. Who have said to the wood, "My father art thou,"
And to the stone, "Thou hast begotten me."
Though they have turned to me the back and not the face;
Yet in the time of their calamity,
They say, "Arise and save us."

The participles in Hebrew are regulated as to their tense by the verbs in the passage. Hence אמרים, in verse 27, is to be in the same tense with the previous verb. The future in the last line is to be in the present, as it expresses what was commonly done. Then what was usually said to them is mentioned in the following verse,—

Nor does he speak only of the common people; but he condemns *kings, princes, priests,* and *prophets,* as though he had said, that they were become so corrupt from the least to the greatest, that having cast off all shame, they openly shewed a manifest and gross contempt for God by following their own inventions and superstitions. And yet the Jews no doubt attempted by many excuses to defend themselves; but God here shakes off all those fallacious pretexts, by which they thought to cover their flagitious deeds, and says that they were notwithstanding manifestly thieves.

The Prophet had said before, that the Jews made a different declaration; and now he condemns their effrontery: but there is no inconsistency as to the meaning. The Jews denied that they were apostates and guilty of perfidy, or that they had forsaken the worship of God; they denied this in words; but the Prophet, in now proclaiming their shamelessness, does not refer to words; for they had ready at hand their false pretensions, as it has been already stated: but the Prophet now takes the fact itself as granted, and says that they wickedly and perversely resisted God, so that their wickedness and obstinacy were past all remedy. It now follows—

27. Saying to a stock, Thou *art* my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face; but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

28. But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for *according to* the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

27. Dicentes ligno, Pater meus tu (*hoc est,* tu es pater meus,) et lapidi, Tu genuisti me (*si legamus per* ', *si autem per* ', Tu genuisti nos;) quia verterunt mihi cervicem (dorsum, *alii vertunt, vel,* posteriora,) et non faciem: in tempore autem calamitatis suæ dicent (*hoc est,* dicunt,) Surge et serva nos.

28. Et ubi sunt dii tui, quos fecisti tibi? Surgant, an servent te tempore mali tui (*hoc est,* afflictionis tuæ, *sicuti prius;*) quia secundum numerum urbium tuarum fuerunt dii tui, Jehudah.

The Prophet here confirms what he had before said of the

28. But where *are* thy gods, which thou hast made for thyself?
Let them arise, if they can save thee
In the time of thy calamity:
For *according to* the number of thy cities
Have been thy gods, O Judah.

Blayney has kept to the past tense as to the last line, and also as to the beginning of verse 26.—*Ed.*

perverse wickedness of the people. He shews that he had not said without reason, that their sins were extremely gross, and could not be excused by any evasions: for they *say*, he adds, *to the wood, Thou art my father, and to the stone, Thou hast begotten me.* By these words the Prophet shews, that idolatry was so rampant among the people, that they openly ascribed to their statues, made of wood or stone, the honour due to the only true God.

But the Prophet points out here what is especially to be detested in idolatry, and that is, the transferring of the honour, due to God, to statues, not only as to the external act by bending the knee before them, but by seeking salvation from them.

And this is what we ought particularly to notice: for the Papists at this day, though they prostrate themselves before their pictures and statues, do not yet acknowledge themselves guilty of idolatry, when such a charge is brought against them. They say that they worship the statues, not with the honour due to God, but with such honour as a servant renders to his master.[1] They think that they thus exculpate themselves. But were we to grant what they allege, they yet cannot deny but that they address prayers and supplications to statues. As then they ask the very statues to save them, whatever sophistry they may adopt, it is altogether nugatory: for the prophets condemn not merely the outward gesture, the bowing down, and other ceremonious acts, as they are called, when they condemned idolaters. What then? They condemned them, because they said to *statues, Thou art my father;* that is, because they ascribed the power, which belongs only to God, to statues made of wood or stone. It is indeed certain, that the Jews never sunk into so great a depth of sottishness as expressly to profess that gods of wood and stone were equal to the true God, and they never said any such thing. Yet the Prophet

[1] The words employed by *Calvin* are the technical terms, *latria* and *dulia*, the fictions of the Papists. The first means specifically worship, and the second, service, obedience. The verb δουλεύω in the New Testament is never used in the sense of worshipping or adoring, but of serving and obeying: but to bow to images or to kiss them, is an act of adoration, and not of service.—*Ed*

did not calumniate them, in ascribing what is here said to them: but as it is clearly evident from other places, the Prophet regarded their thoughts rather than their words: for the Jews professed the same thing as the Papists of the present day, when they prostrated themselves before their statues; they said that they worshipped the only true God and sought salvation from him; and yet they thought that the power of God was inherent in the statues themselves: hence they said, *Thou art my father, Thou hast begotten me.* The case is the same with the Papists of the present day. When any one prostrates himself before the statue of Catherine or of Christopher, he says, "Our Father." When he justifies himself in doing this, he says that it is done in honour to the one true God: and yet thou runnest blindly, now to one statue, and then to another, and mutterest, "Our Father." There is not the least doubt but that the superstition which now prevails under the Papacy, is even more gross than that which prevailed among the Jews. But to say nothing of the Papists, because they mutter, "Our Father," before their statues, there is no doubt but that when they present their prayers to statues, they consider God's power to be in them.

We must now, then, bear in mind, that the Jews were not only condemned, because they burnt incense and offered sacrifices to idols, but because they transferred the glory of God to their statues, when they asked salvation from them. And as this was not done in express words, the Prophet here brings to light their impious thoughts; for they did not raise up their minds and thoughts to God, but turned them to their statues.

It afterwards follows, *They have turned to me the neck*[1] *and not the face.* In these words, God again confirms what he had before said, that the apostasy or defection of the people

[1] The "neck" here means evidently the hinder part, for it is in contrast with "face;" and the word generally means the hinder part. Hence it is properly rendered here "back" in our version and by *Blayney*, and so by the *Targum* and the early versions, except the *Syriac*, which retains the hinder part of the neck. We have no single word, except it be nape, which denotes the back part of the neck. There is one in *Welsh*, "gwegil," and so in *Latin*, "cervix," and in *Greek*, ἀυχὴν. But the *Septuagint* have adopted here "νῶτα—backs."—*Ed.*

was more manifest than what could be disguised by any colourings. He then adds, *Yet* (the ו is to be taken here adversatively) *in the time of their affliction, they will say, Arise, and save us.* God here complains that the Jews most strangely abused his kindness; for they came to him when any grievous calamity constrained them. "What have I to do with you?" he says, "Ye are wholly devoted to your idols, ye call them your fathers, and ascribe to them the glory of your salvation, when things go on peaceably with you; but when your idols in time of distress give you no aid, then ye return to me and say, *Arise, and save us;* but since idols are your fathers, and ye expect salvation from them, I shall have nothing to do with you; be contented with your idols, and trouble me no more, for I have been forsaken by you."

And hence he adds, *Where are your gods?* Here God laughs to scorn the false confidence by which the Jews deceived themselves: *Where are your gods, which you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, let us see whether they will help you in the time of your distress.* We now understand what the Prophet means: for he shews that the people acted in a most strange manner; for they worshipped idols when they were in safety, and afterwards would have God to be bound to them; and yet they denied the true God when they fell away unto idols. He then shews that they could expect no aid from God; for they robbed him of his own power when they devised idols for themselves. But we must ever remember what he said, that false gods were counted as fathers and authors of salvation by the people.

The same thing is, no doubt, done at this day under the Papacy; for the Papists have their patrons; and when they find that their foolish superstitions can do nothing for them, they would have God to help them, and yet they leave nothing to him: after having taken away all his glory, and divided it as a spoil among dead saints, they would then have God to be their helper. But we see what God's answer to them is, "Where are your gods?" &c.

Now this truth is of use to us; and we hence learn, that we are not to wait until we are really, and in the last state of despair, compelled to acknowledge that our labours have

been useless, while we hoped and prayed for help from idols; but that we ought to come directly to God himself for aid in our distress.

God proceeds farther with the sarcasm or the derision which he has employed, *Where are thy gods? Let them now arise that they may help thee;* that is,—let them try their utmost whether they can aid thee. *According to the number of thy cities have been thy gods, O Judah.* As the people were not satisfied with one God, every city chose a patron for itself. "Since, then, innumerable gods are invoked by you, how comes it that they do not help you?" We hence see that the unbelief of the people is here sharply reproved; for they did not acquiesce in God alone, but sought to procure for themselves gods without number: there were many cities in the tribe of Judah, and there were as many patrons. The one true God would have been fully sufficient for them, and would have brought them complete deliverance whenever needed; but the one true God they despised, and every city devised a god for itself. "Since ye trust," he says, "in such a multitude, *let them now arise, that they may succour you;* for I, who am one, am despised by you." We now understand what the Prophet means also in this part. It afterwards follows—

29. Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord.

29. Cur litigatis mecum omnes impiè agentes in me (*vel*, perfidè)? dicit Jehova.

Jeremiah concludes here his previous subject: he says that the Jews gained nothing by alleging against God that they were innocent, and by thinking that they could by mere words escape his judgment, and not only by doing so, but also by hurrying on to such a degree of presumption as to challenge God himself, and to seek to prove him guilty. But God answers them in one word, and says, that they were perfidious. The meaning then is, that the Jews ill consulted their own interest in hardening themselves in their obduracy; for God would hold them fully convicted of impiety, so that they in vain alleged this or that as an excuse.[1]

[1] The verb rendered "plead" in our version, is followed by בְּ, against or in opposition to. There are two other instances, Jud. xxi. 22; Job

Now this passage deserves especial notice: for we know how prone we are by nature to hypocrisy; and when God summons us to his tribunal, hardly one in a hundred will acknowledge his guilt and humbly pray for forgiveness; but the greater part complains, nay almost all murmur against God, and still more, they gather boldness, and proudly dare to challenge and defy God. Since, then, hypocrisy thus prevails in us and is deeply fixed in the hearts of almost all, and since hypocrisy generates insolence and pride against God, let us remember what the Prophet says here,—that all who dispute against God gain nothing by their excuses, because he will at length detect their defection and perfidy. It then follows—

30. In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

30. Frustra (*vel*, in vanum) castigavi filios tuos, correctionem non receperunt; voravit gladius vester prophetas vestros quasi leo vastator.

Some expound the beginning of this verse as though the meaning were,—that God chastised the Jews on account of their folly, because they habituated themselves to falsehoods: but the latter clause does not correspond. There is therefore no doubt but that God here expostulates with the Jews, because he had tried to bring them to the right way and found them wholly irreclaimable. A similar expostulation

xxxiii. 13. Our version in Job is, "Why dost thou strive against him?" The most suitable rendering of this passage is,

Why should ye contend against (or, with) me?

Then follows a fact sufficient to put an end to all contention,—

All of you have rebelled against me,
Saith Jehovah.

The primary idea of פָּשַׁע is, to go, to pass, to march on. See Is. xxvii. 4. Its meaning depends on the preposition which follows it. Followed by בְּ, over, it means to transgress, it being a *going* or *passing over* the limits set by the law, Hos. viii. 1,—by מִן, to go from, to revolt, to apostatize, 2 Kings viii. 22,—and by בְּ, to go against, to rebel, as in this passage. Hence the noun has attained various meanings—transgression, apostasy, and rebellion. Its precise meaning in any case is to be determined by the context. *Gataker* and *Blayney* render the verb here the same,—

All of you have rebelled against me, saith Jehovah.

The early versions vary. The *Septuagint* have "ἠσεβήσατε—ye have acted impiously,"—the *Syriac*, "ye have denied me,"—the *Arabic*, "ye have sinned against me,"—and the *Vulgate*, "ye have forsaken me." The general idea is the same, but the specific one is that of rebelling against God.—*Ed.*

is found in Isaiah, "In vain," he says, "have I chastised you; for from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness." (Is. i. 6.) There God shews that he had tried every remedy, but that the Jews, being wholly refractory in their spirit, were wholly incurable. Jeremiah speaks now on the same subject: and God thus exaggerates the wickedness of the people; for he testifies that he had tried whether they would be taught, not only by words, but also by scourges and chastisements, but that his labour in both instances had been in vain. He spoke before of teaching, "Keep thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst." The Prophets, then, had exhorted the Jews by God's command to rest quietly. This teaching had been useless and unfruitful. God now adds, that he had tried in another way to bring them back to a right mind; but this effort had been also useless and in vain: *In vain have I chastised you; for ye have not received correction.*

But he speaks of *children*, in order to shew that the whole people were unteachable: for though lusts boil more in youth, yet their obduracy is not so great as in the old; as he who has through his whole life hardened himself in the contempt of God, can hardly be ever healed and be amended by correction; for old age is of itself morose and difficult to be pleased, and the old also think, that wrong is in a manner done them when they are reproved: but when the insolence and obduracy of the young are so great that they reject all correction, it is more strange and monstrous. The Prophet then shews that there was nothing sound or right in that people, since their very children refused correction.[1]

We now perceive his object,—that, as God had sent his prophets, and as their labour availed nothing, he now shews, that not only the ears of the people had been deaf to whole-

[1] *Blayney* renders the word "instruction." The *Septuagint* have "παιδίαν—discipline;" the *Syriac*, *Vulgate*, and the *Targum* are the same; but the *Arabic* has "instruction—eruditionem." The strict meaning of the word מוּסָר, is restraint, check, discipline, correction. Not to receive restraint or correction, is not to be thereby improved or reformed, but to proceed in the same course, see chap. v. 3. The word has also a secondary meaning, instruction, as the effect of correction, see Zeph. iii. 7. But here it clearly means correction.—*Ed.*

some teaching, but that they were hard-necked and untameable; for he had tried to correct them by scourges, but effected nothing. It follows, *their sword has devoured the prophets.* But I cannot finish now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou, in thy paternal kindness, daily invitest us to thyself, we may not harden ourselves against thy holy and salutary admonitions: and whenever thou chastisest us with scourges, may we not become obdurate against thee, but learn humbly to submit to thy word, and receive thy chastisement, and so profit by both, that we may not be exposed to the extreme judgment which thou denouncest on the obstinate; but may we, on the contrary, open a way for thy paternal goodness, so that thou mayest kindly deal with us, until thou receivest us into that blessed rest which has been prepared for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Ninth.

In yesterday's lecture, God complained that he had spent labour in vain in chastising the children of Israel; for they were of a nature utterly untameable and refractory, incapable of being improved. Hence he says, "I have in vain endeavoured by punishments to bring you back to the right way." But he now exaggerates their crime of obduracy, as they not only had rejected wholesome instruction, but had also shed innocent blood, and persecuted as their enemies the prophets who had been sent to them from above, in order to promote their wellbeing. God then condemns them here not only for perverseness, but also for cruelty; for he says, that he had not gained his object in leading them to repentance, and also, that they had not only been refractory and incorrigible, but that they had besides cruelly raged against the prophets: and Jerusalem, we know, had been a slaughter-house where many of the prophets had been killed.

Some explain the passage of false teachers, as though the Prophet had said, that it was to be ascribed to the wickedness of the people, that prophets, who were false and men-

dacious, suffered just punishment; and they lay hold on one word, even because they are called *their* prophets. Hence *Jerome* says, that they were said to be *your*, and not my prophets; as though God thus denied that he had given them any commission. But this view is forced and strained.

We must, then, understand the meaning to be what I have stated,—that when God used means to heal the vices of the people, the very prophets, the ministers of salvation, were cruelly slain by the people. And this exposition best suits the expressions which follow, *as a devouring lion.* For God says, that the Jews raged against the prophets, as though they had entered a forest full of lions. It now follows—

31. O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

31. Generatio, vos vidite verbum Jehovæ, an desertum fui Israel? an terra caliginis? Quare dixerunt populus meus (*hoc est*, dixit, *sed plurali utitur, quia est nomen collectivum*) dominati sumus (*alii*, recessimus,) non veniemus amplius ad te.

The prophet assumes the character, no doubt, of one in astonishment, that he might render the sin of the people more detestable: for he speaks as one astonished, *generation!* The word, דור, *dur*, as it is well known, means an age. It is then the same as if he had said, "On what time are we fallen? or in what an age do we now live?" We now then perceive the import of the word. Then he adds, *See ye the word of Jehovah.* The word, *see*, seems not to be suitable; for he ought to have said, "Attend to," or "hear." But he bids them to see, and most appropriate is the term; for he does not require the people to hear, but, on the contrary, to know, as though he had said, "See ye yourselves what this is which the Lord declares." And he emphatically says, אתם, *atem*, "ye yourselves." For the Jews might have been deservedly condemned by all nations, were they brought into judgment. But the Prophet shews, that however blind they were, they might see with their own eyes what the Lord now says. He does not refer to instruction, but to a fact, as though he had said, "The Lord by me expostulates with you; and though there should not be present any witnesses or a judge or an umpire, ye yourselves are able to understand

and know the whole matter." We hence see how fitly the Prophet speaks, when he bids them to *see the word of Jehovah.*[1]

For he immediately adds, *Have I been a desert to Israel?* He makes the Jews themselves the umpires and judges of the cause, whether they had not experienced the bounty of God and had forsaken him, according to his former complaint, when he said that God was the fountain of living waters, and that they had dug for themselves broken cisterns. Hence he says, "How has it happened that ye have departed from me? Have I in vain promised to be bountiful and kind to you? Did I disappoint you or your expectation, while ye served me? Since then I had not been to you a dark and a gloomy land, a land without the light of the sun; but as abundance of blessings had ever been found in me, how has it been that you have departed from me?"

He afterwards mentions another crime, Why has my people said, *We are lords.* The verb רדנו, *redenu*, is variously explained by interpreters. Some derive it from ירד, *ired*, to

[1] The beginning of this verse literally is "The age, ye," that is, "Ye of this age," or generation. He was speaking before more especially of the preceding age. He now appeals to the people of that generation,—

Ye of this age, see, spoken hath Jehovah,—
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,
Or a land of darkness?
Why have they said, *even* my people,
"We have ruled, we will no more come to thee?"

The above rendering of the latter part of the first line is favoured by the *Septuagint*, "Hear ye the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord." The *Arabic* is the same. The *Vulgate* has, "See the word of the Lord,"—and the *Syriac*, "Hear the word of the Lord." *Blayney* renders thus, "Behold ye the cause of Jehovah." *Gataker* takes "see" in the sense of considering, "See," or seriously consider, "the word of the Lord." The particle אם after ה, may be rendered "or," as in the *Syriac*. See Josh. v. 13. The word מאפליה is found in two MSS., מאפילה, which seems to be the true reading, countenanced by the *Targum*, and all the early versions, except the *Vulgate*, which has "serotina—lateward." Darkness is a common metaphor for wretchedness and misery. "We have ruled" is the literal rendering of רדנו, and there is no other reading. The *Septuagint* gives the same meaning, though the form is different, "We shall not be lorded over—*οὐ κυριευθησόμεθα.*" The *Arabic* is the same. It is the language of proud independence. The *Targum*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Syriac* have mistaken the verb for ירדנו, which means, to descend, to come down, to bring down. *Blayney* gives the correct idea, "We are our own masters," which *Horsley* approves. The preterite in Hebrew often includes the present; so the full meaning is, "We have ruled and do rule."—*Ed.*

descend, and think that the י, *iod*, is supplied by a point. But these differ in their views: some refer to the calamities with which the Jews had been visited, and others to their apostasy. The first give this explanation, "We have descended;" that is, "We have been oppressed with calamities, what then can we gain by calling on God, since our affairs are in so hopeless a state?" The second draw forth another meaning, "We have gone back;" that is, "There is no reason for the prophets to stun our ears by their clamours, for we have once for all resolved never to return to God; we have wholly renounced him; away with him, let him begone together with his exhortations, for we will not attend to them." Both these expounders think it to be the language of despair: but we perceive how they differ; the first apply "descend" to the calamities of the people, and the second to their perfidy, because they had bidden adieu, as it were, to God, and wished not to have any farther intercourse with him.

But there are others who take the word more grammatically: for רדה, *rede*, and רוד, *rud*, signifies to be lord, or to rule. I therefore prefer the view of those who render the word, *We are lords.* Some take the verb in a passive sense, but I know not for what reason: and the comment of others is very diluted, "We have kings and counsellors." I consider it to be the language of pride and of vain boasting: for the Jews thought themselves to be kings, according to what Paul says of the Corinthians, "Ye are rich, ye have reigned without us, and I would ye did reign." (1 Cor. iv. 8.) The Corinthians, being inflated with pride on account of the opulence of their city, despised the simplicity of the Gospel; they looked for refined things, and were much addicted to novelties. Hence Paul, seeing that they despised the grace of God, ironically reproved them, and said, that they wished to be rich and to be kings without him, to whom yet as an instrument they owed everything. The same vice is what Jeremiah now condemns in that people, *We are lords, we will not come to thee;* as though he had said, "Your happiness has hitherto proceeded from me; for whatever you have been, and whatever has been given you, ought to be ascribed to

me and to my bounty: but now without me (for God himself speaks) ye are kings, but by what right and by what title? What have you as your own? *Why then has my people said, We will come no more to thee?"* We now understand the real meaning of the Prophet.

As to the subject itself, he in the first place, as I have already said, is in a manner astonished at the wickedness of the people, as at something monstrous. Hence he exclaims, *O generation!* as though he had said, that what he saw was incredible. Then he immediately adds, *see ye yourselves the word of Jehovah.* This was much more severe, than if he had summoned them before God's tribunal; for he thus proved that their wickedness was extremely gross; for they had, without any cause, nay, without any pretext, and without shame, renounced God, who had been so bountiful towards them. He also in an indirect manner reproved them, because they refused to be instructed; for he commanded them to look on the fact itself, inasmuch as they were deaf, or having ears they closed them against all instruction; for, as we have said, he calls away their attention from the word to the fact itself, and this is what interpreters have not observed.

Then follows an upbraiding,—that *God had not been a desert to them;* but, as the Prophet had before shewed, abundance of all blessings had flowed to them so as fully to satisfy them. Since then God had enriched them through his blessing, their sin in departing from him was thereby more increased.

In the last part of the verse God expostulates with them on their ingratitude, because they thought themselves to be lords. They were indeed a royal priesthood, but it was through God's favour. They did not reign through their own right, they did not reign because they had attained power through their own valour or efforts, or through their own merits or their own good fortune; how then? only through the favour of another. Though then they were kings only on the condition of being subject to the supreme King, yet they wished to reign alone, that is, according to their own pleasure; and thus trod under their feet the favour

of God. It is with this wickedness then that the Prophet charges them. And the end of the verse is of the same import, *we will come no more to thee;* as though they stood in no need of God's aid; for they thought that they could supply themselves with whatever was necessary to support them. As then they were inflated with much pride, they despised the favour of God, as though they stood in no need of the aid of another. It follows—

32. Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

32. An obliviscetur puella ornamenti sui? Sponsa ligaminum suorum (*ad verbum; alii vertunt,* murenulas; *alii,* torques; *sed nomen hoc deducitur a* קשר, *quod est ligare; apud nos possemus vertere* tressures *propriè?*) populus autem meus (*nam vau debet resolvi in adversativam particulam*) oblitus est mei diebus innumeris (quibus non est numerus, *ad verbum.*)

God here confirms what is said in the last verse, and would make his people ashamed, because they valued him less than girls are wont to value their ornaments. The necklaces of young women are indeed nothing but mere trifles, and yet we see that girls are so taken with them through a foolish passion, that they value such trinkets more than their very life. "How then is it," says God, "*that my people have forgotten me?* Is there to be found any such ornament? Can anything be found among the most valuable jewels and the most precious stones which can be compared with me?"

God shews by this comparison how perverted the minds of the Jews were, when they renounced and rejected a benefit so invaluable as to have God as their Father, and to be prosperous under his dominion; for nothing necessary for a blessed life had been wanting to them as long as they continued the recipients of that paternal favour, which God had manifested towards them, and wished to shew to them to the end. As then they had found God to have been so bountiful, must they not have been more than mad, when they wilfully rejected his favour? while yet young women commonly set their thoughts and affections strongly and permanently on such trifles as are of no value.[1] But the Prophet

[1] The second word, כלה, is rendered "sponsa—a bride," in our version, by *Calvin* and *Blayney*, and so by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and the *Targum*,

designedly used this similitude, that he might introduce what is contained in the next verse: his object was to compare the Jews to adulterous women, who being led away by unbridled lust, follow wanton lovers. As then he intended to bring this charge against the Jews, he spoke expressly of the ornaments of young women; and hence it follows—

33. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.

33. Cur bonificas (*id est*, paras, concinnas) vias tuas ad quærendum amorem? itaque etiam pravitates docuisti in viis tuis.

This verse is differently explained: but the Prophet simply means, that the Jews were like lascivious women, who not only despise their husbands at home, but ramble here and there in all directions, and also paint their faces and seek for themselves all the charms of wantonness. He says that the Jews had acted in this way; and hence he says that they *made beautiful their ways.* The verb in Hebrew has a wide meaning: it means to prepare, to conciliate favour. But its import here is, as though the Prophet had said, "Why dost thou disguise and paint thyself like strumpets, who use many artifices to allure young men and to inflame their lusts? why then dost thou undertake so much labour to gain a meretricious hire?" We shall hereafter see why he says this; for he upbraids them for applying to the Assyrians and the Egyptians.

It was a common thing with the Prophets to compare the people to lovers; for the Jews, while they ought to have been firmly attached to God, (like a chaste woman, who does not

but by the *Septuagint*, "παρθένος—a virgin:" and *Parkhurst* says that it never means a bride. The version then ought to be,

Can a maid forget her ornaments,
A virgin her bands?

That the word קִשֻּׁרִים means bands of some kind is evident, as the verb signifies to bind, to join closely. Bands or bandage for the breast—στηθοδεσμίδα, is the version of the *Septuagint;* the *Arabic* and the *Vulgate* are the same. *Parkhurst* considers that "head-bands" are meant. The word is found also in Is. iii. 20; where the *Septuagint* render it "δακτυλίοις—rings," and the *Targum*, "murenulas—chains," which were of gold, and worn around the neck. For any practical purpose it is only necessary to know that they were embellishments which young women delighted in: and women in every age are too fond of such things, and men too; but the case is introduced here only for the sake of illustration.—*Ed.*

turn her eyes here and there, nor gad about, but has respect to her husband alone,) thought to seek safety now from the Assyrians, then from the Egyptians. This sinful disposition is then what the Prophet here condemns; and hence he speaks of them metaphorically as of an adulterous woman, who despises her husband and rambles after any she can find, and seeks wanton and silly young men in all places, and subjects herself to the gratification of all. We now then understand what the Prophet means.

The words must be noticed: he says, *Why makest thou fine thy ways?* But he refers here to the care which a wanton woman takes to adorn her person, as though he had said, "Why dost thou thus prepare thyself? and why dost thou seek for thyself what is splendid and elegant, that thy appearance may deceive the eyes of the simple?" For the Jews might have remained safe and secure under God's protection, and might have been so without any calamity. As a husband is content with the beauty of his wife, and seeks no adventitious and refined elegancies; so God required nothing from that people except fidelity, like a husband, who requires chastity in his wife. The meaning then is,—"As a wife, really attached to her husband, has no need to undergo much labour, for she knows that her own native beauty pleases him, nor does she labour much to gain the heart of her husband, for the best recommendation is her chastity; so ye might have lived without any trouble by only serving me and keeping my law: but now what is your chastity? ye are like wanton women, who labour to gain the hearts of adulterers; for as they burn with lust, so there is no end nor limits to their attempts to seek embellishments; and they torment themselves, only that they might attach adulterers to themselves. Such then are ye (says God;) for ye spend much care and labour in seeking for yourselves strange lovers."

He afterwards adds, *Therefore thou hast also taught lewdnesses.* He alludes to the words he had before used, *Thou hast made fine* (or fair) *thy ways:* and now he says, *thou hast also taught wickednesses by thy ways.* He declares that the Jews were worse than the Assyrians and the Egyptians, as

a lascivious woman is far worse than all the adulterers whom she captivates as her paramours. For when a young man is not deceived, and the devil does not apply the fagot, he may continue chaste and pure; but when an impudent and wanton woman entices him, it is all over with him. The Prophet then says, that the Assyrians and the Egyptians were innocent when compared with his own nation. How so? "Because they have been led away," he says, "by your allurements, like young men, who are destroyed by the fallacious ornaments of strumpets; for it is the same as though they had fallen into snares: the evil then has proceeded from you, and the fault lies with you."[1]

We now understand the Prophet's meaning: for he condemns the Jews, because they afforded an occasion of evil both to the Assyrians and to the Egyptians, while they of their own accord sought their favour. It now follows—

כ 34. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

34. Etiam in alis tuis repertus est sanguis animarum pauperum innocentum; non in suffossione repertæ erant, sed super omnibus his (*alii vertunt* quia in omnibus illis; *et particula est causalis, sed tamen hic adversativè debet resolvi, quemadmodum multis locis.*)

The Prophet repeats, as I think, what he had before said,—that the wickedness of his nation was incorrigible; for they repented not when warned, but on the contrary raged like wild beasts against the Prophets and religious teachers. Those interpreters are mistaken who think that the savage cruelty of the Jews in general is here condemned; and all are of this opinion. But the Prophet no doubt enhances this evil, by saying, that the Jews were not only obstinate in their vices, but also raged furiously against the

[1] The exposition of this verse is no doubt materially correct. The words have been variously rendered, On the first clause there is a general agreement. The verb "taught" in the second, is in the first person in the received text; and to this reading *Blayney* gives the preference, and thus renders the line,—

Therefore also have I taught calamities thy ways.

That is, "that God had directed calamities where to find them." But this is rather a remote idea. In favour of the second person, "thou hast taught," are several MSS., all the early versions and the *Targum;* and it is what has been by most adopted. "The wicked ones" of our version is a rendering not countenanced by any of the ancient versions, nor by the *Targum;* all render it evil or evils or wickednesses.—*Ed.*

Prophets. Hence he shews again, that God had used all remedies to heal the Jews, but without effect. For what better medicine could have been offered than for the Prophets to reprove the people and to shew to them how wickedly they had departed from God? God then wished thus to correct the vices of his own people; but so far was he from effecting anything, that at Jerusalem and through the whole of Judea, the Prophets were slaughtered, and the whole land was filled with and polluted by their blood.

Hence he says, *Even in thy wings has been found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents.* He calls the borders of garments wings. He seems to say, that these slaughters were not hid, for the Jews were besprinkled with blood to the very extremities of their garment; as though he had said, "There is no cause for me to deal sharply with you in this instance; for your filthiness is most apparent: ye have not only been rebellious against my teaching, but ye have also cruelly murdered my prophets. If ye ask, Where these slaughters are to be found? Even in your wings, on the borders of your garments; so that your crimes are fully known." We now perceive what the Prophet means.

We must also notice the import of the particle גַּם, *gam*, also, or even. Their cruelty was worse and more nefarious, because they thus rose up against their own physicians; for the prophets, as it has been said, were the ministers of their safety. As then they thus raged against God's favour so as to murder his prophets, it became still more evident, that they were utterly irreclaimable.

He afterwards adds what serves for a confirmation. *They have not been found in digging under.* Some give another explanation; but their opinion is right who think, that the Prophet alludes to what is said by Moses in Ex. xxii. 2,—that if a thief should be found in digging under, (or undermining,) he might be killed with impunity: for he who thus breaks through into the houses of others, is equal to a robber in audacity; and he ought to be counted not only a thief, but also as one guilty of manslaughter and felony. God then says, that the Prophets, who had been slain by the Jews, had not been *found in digging up*, that is, had not been

found guilty of any crime, either of robbery or of murder: for he mentions a particular act, instead of the general crime. But it has been *on account of all these things;* that is, "because they boldly dared to reprove you, because they severely condemned your vices, because they discovered your baseness, because they were enemies to your perfidy and to your sins: as then the prophets had thus by the divine Spirit carried on war with your sins, they have on this account been murdered by you."[1]

We see how well the whole passage reads, provided it be applied to the prophets only. It was not indeed the object of Jeremiah to condemn murders generally among the Jews, but to shew that they were the enemies of the prophets, because they were opposed to every good and sound counsel, and were incapable of receiving instruction. The mistake of other expounders is hereby made evident: for in the last clause they touch neither heaven nor earth. It follows—

35. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me: behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.

35. Et dixisti (*hoc est*, dixisti tamen; *nam copula hic accipitur pro* tamen,) certè (*nam* כִּי *causalis particula hic audaciam notat, vel illam jactantiam plenam impudentiæ, ut auderent asserere Iudæi se esse innoxios*, certè) ego sum munda (ego sum innocens;) tantùm recedat furor ejus à me: Ecce ego judico te (*vel*, contendam tecum in judicio,) quia dixisti, non peccavi.

[1] Our version of this text seems on the whole the best. "Blood," דַּם, is to be taken here in a collective sense, as the verb to which it belongs is plural. Instead of "poor innocents," it ought rather to be "the innocent poor," as the noun in Hebrew generally *precedes* its adjective. "Found" is in the first person, and there is no different reading, and it is so in the *Septuagint*, and the *Vulgate*, though the *Syriac* and *Arabic* give the second person, and the *Targum* the third person plural, as *Calvin* does. The last word is rendered "these" in the *Vulgate* and the *Targum;* but "oak" in the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*, and adopted by *Blayney*, but disapproved by *Houbigant* and *Horsley*. As to the word, rendered in our version, "secret search," the early versions have pit, pits, or ditches, and so the *Targum*. *Blayney* renders it "a digged hole," of which *Horsley* approves; and he refers, as an illustration, to Lev. xvii. 13, and to Ezek. xxiv. 7. The word means digging, and seems to be used here metaphorically for searching; there is no need of adding "secret" to it,—

Also in thy skirts has been found
The blood of the souls of the innocent poor:
Not by searching have I found it,
But upon all these (*i.e.*, skirts.)

The reference is to what is said in ver. 30, where the Jews are charged with the killing the prophets. As to "the blood," we find a similar passage in Ezek. xxiv. 7, 8.—*Ed.*

The Prophet here shews that the Jews were possessed of such a brazen front, that they could not be led by any admonitions to feel any shame. Though then they were like adulterous women, and though they gave meretricious hire to such as they ran to in all parts, and though also they had murdered the prophets and the pious ministers of God, yet they boasted, as persons conscious of no evil, that they were innocent.

Thou hast yet said; that is, "How darest thou to pretend to be innocent, since thou art proved to be guilty, not by allegations, but by manifest and glaring proofs?" In short, the Prophet shews that the condition of the people was past remedy, for they would not receive any admonition; nay, they dared, as it were with the front of brass, obstinately to boast that they were innocent: Thou hast said, (he still speaks of a woman, in the feminine gender,) *Thou hast yet said, surely I am clean.* Thus hypocrites not only excuse themselves, and allege vain pretences, but dare to come forth publicly, and to fly as it were above the clouds, elated by their own self-confidence. "Who will dare to allege anything against me?" Thus hypocrites wilfully and impertinently challenge all the servants of God and seek by their own presumption to close the mouth of all. The Prophet now condemns this petulancy in the Jews; for though they were manifestly proved guilty, yet they boastingly asserted that they were innocent. *Only* (אַךְ, *ak*, I take here to mean only) *depart*, &c. The Prophet here upbraids the Jews with another crime,—that they said, that wrong was done to them by God in seeking to bring them to a right mind by punishment and by reproofs. For God, as it is well known, had inflicted many punishments on the Jews, and had also added serious reproofs. He tried by these means to find out whether they were capable of being healed. What did they say? "I am innocent; and God is angry with me without a cause. *Let him remove his anger from me;*" that is, "only let not God deal severely with us, nor use his supreme authority, and we shall be able to prove our innocency." Thus ungodly men, when urged with severe warnings, vomit forth their blasphemies against God,—"O what can I do?

I know that I am not able to resist; God fights with a shadow when he afflicts me; his violence I must indeed bear though he may overwhelm me; yet he doeth me wrong: but were he to deal justly and fairly with me, I could prove that I do not deserve these evils." Such then was the language of the Jews,—*only depart let his fury from me*, we could then shew that we are just, or at least excusable.

Now also in this part we perceive the design of the Prophet: it was to shew, that the Jews not only dared dishonestly and proudly to claim innocency for themselves, but hesitated not to contend with God, and to intimate that he with too much severity oppressed them, and did not treat them justly, but announced a cruel sentence for the purpose of overwhelming them.

Behold, he says, *I will judge thee, because thou hast said, I have not sinned.* Some give this version, "I judge, *or*, condemn thee." But there is here no doubt a contrast between the fury of God and his judgment. The people said, that God was too rigorous; this was his fury: God now mentions his judgment. "There is no reason," he says, "for you to allege such a pretext as this, as it will vanish into nothing; for I will in judgment contend with you;" that is, "I will really prove that I am a just judge and not a tyrant, that I execute just punishments and according to the law, and that I am not like a man in anger, who takes vengeance on his enemies and does so precipitantly and rashly: I will shew," he says, "that I am a just judge."

We may hence gather a profitable instruction. Let it in the first place be observed, that nothing is so displeasing to God as this headstrong presumption, that is, when we seek to appear innocent, while our own conscience condemns us. Then in the second place observe, that all who thus perversely rebel and strive dishonestly and shamelessly to defend their own vices, contend at the same time with God: for false excuses have ever this tendency—to charge God with unjust severity. But we see what such men gain for themselves; for God shews that he will be at length their judge, and that he will openly discover the vices of those who thought that they could excuse themselves by evasions

and by false charges against himself. They then who thus obstinately resist God, must at length, according to what the Prophet declares, come to this end,—that they will be constrained to acknowledge that God has not been too violently angry with them, but has only executed a just punishment.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are loaded with so many vices, and provoke thee so often, yea, daily and in ways innumerable,—O grant, that we may not at last become hardened against thy godly admonitions, but be teachable and submissive and in time repent, lest our wantonness and hardness should constrain thee to put forth thy powerful hand against us; but as we have hitherto experienced thy paternal kindness, so may we in future be made partakers of it, and thus become more and more accustomed to bear thy yoke, until having at length completed our warfare, we shall come to that blessed rest, which has been provided for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Tenth.

36. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.

36. Quid discurris tantopere ad mutandum vias tuas? Etiam ab Egypto pudefies, sicuti pudefacta es ab Assur.

THE Prophet goes on with the same subject. He had said before that the people were like an unfaithful wife, who

[1] The literal rendering of this verse is as follows:—

35. And thou hast said, "Verily I have been innocent;
Surely turned away has he his anger from me:"
Behold I will contend in judgment with thee,
On account of thy saying, "I have not sinned."

The *Septuagint* have rendered the second line, "Let his anger be turned away from me;" the *Vulgate* and the *Arabic* are the same. The *Syriac* is, "therefore he turns away his anger from me." "Turned away is his anger," is the *Targum*, *Piscator*, *Jun.* and *Trem.* *Blayney* renders it,—

Surely his wrath shall turn from me.

There is no reason for construing the verb in the future tense, or in the imperative mood. It is in the past tense, and there is no other reading. The claim of innocency is made on the supposition that God had turned away his displeasure. Hence the declaration that follows—that God would contest the matter—would bring it as it were into trial, as the verb here שפט נ in Niphal means.—*Ed.*

having left her husband rambles here and there to gratify her lusts. For this view he now gives the reason; for he might have appeared to treat the people too severely, had not the fact been pointed out as it were by the finger; and this he does now. He says, that they ran here and there, not in a common manner, but in a way to render evident their shameful levity, such as is seen in strumpets, who without any shame seek either adulterers or fornicators.

But I have already briefly shewn what the Prophet means: When any danger was nigh, the Jews sought aid, now in Egypt, then in Assyria. Yet they knew that this was forbidden them; not that it was in itself an evil or a bad thing to seek help from neighbours; but because it was God's will that the safety and security of that people should be dependent on him only; for he had taken them under his safeguard. As then the Jews were God's dependents, they ought to have acquiesced in his protection. When they wandered here and there, it was an evidence of unbelief; and what they attributed to the Egyptians or to Assyrians, they took away from their own God, who had promised that their safety would be the object of his care. Hence he compares these movements to wanton levity; they were like those of strumpets, who ramble in all directions. Now a strumpet must be wholly shameless, when she thus seeks the gratification of her lust: for harlots often wait for the coming of lovers; but when they ramble everywhere, they are altogether abominable. This then is what the Prophet now means, that is, that the Jews ran here and there; and thus it was, that they *changed their ways.*

There remains indeed often in harlots some natural love; but it is a proof of a brutish, shameless, and monstrous lust, when a woman seeks the company of any one she may see, or when a man lusts after any woman he may meet with. When there is such a shamelessness as this, it appears that no modesty remains, nor even what is natural; for as I have already said, it ought to be deemed monstrous, when a woman is inflamed with lust at the sight of any one. And yet this lewdness is what the Prophet reprobates in the Jews when he says, that they *ran here and there to change their*

ways: so that their love never continued, but they lusted after any they met with; nay, they went here and there to allure them. This subject is spoken of oftener and more at large by Ezekiel; and we shall find this comparison used also in other parts of this book. But it is enough for me to mention briefly the design of the Prophet.[1]

He then adds, *Ashamed shalt thou also be of the Egyptians, as ashamed thou hast been of the Assyrians.* Before the time of Hezekiah, the Jews had made a treaty with the Assyrians against the Syrians and the Israelites, as it is well known; and then against the Egyptians; for soon after a war arose between them and the Egyptians, who had been their confederates, and changing their policy, they went for help to Assyria. They afterwards reconciled themselves to their ancient enemies; but this second treaty also turned out unhappily. Hence the Prophet says, that the end would be the same with what they had before experienced. God had indeed chastised their ungodly defection when they went to Assyria. He now says, that no better success would attend the help of the Egyptians than what attended the help of the Assyrians. The Jews, we know, were ever subjected to plunder, and suffered more loss from their associates than from their open enemies. It was the just reward of their impiety and defection. God then declares that he would be the avenger of this second defection, as he had been of the former. It follows—

[1] The idea of gadding, or of running here and there, is not countenanced by any of the early versions. The notion of vileness or degradation is what the versions convey. The *Vulgate* is,—

Quàm vilis factus es nimis, iterans vias tuas!
How extremely worthless art thou become, iterating thy ways!

The other versions are nearly of the same general import. *Blayney's* version is,—

Why wilt thou make thyself exceedingly vile,
In repeating over again thy ways?

Modern critics have considered the verb to be אזל, and not זל. It no doubt may be either. As shame is threatened at the end of the verse, the latter verb is the most suitable,—

Why shouldest thou become wholly degraded
By repeating thy course?
Even by Egypt shalt thou be put to shame,
As thou hast been put to shame by Assyria.

"Course," or way, means here a proceeding, and to repeat it is to pursue a course similar to what had been previously adopted.—*Ed.*

37. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

37. Et jam ab hoc (ab hac re, *hoc est*, propter hoc scelus) egredieris, et manus tuæ super caput tuum, quia detestatur Jehova confidentias tuas, et in illis non prosperè tibi succedet.

He expresses more clearly what he had said of the shameful character of his own nation,—that the Jews, who thought that their safety would be secured by the Egyptians, were seeking their own entire ruin. This seemed to them indeed incredible; for as the Egyptians were neighbours, and as the Jews then only feared the Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were afar off, they thought that they had the best prospect: "What! our enemies are distant from us twenty or thirty days' journey; and those who are prepared to help us will be soon with us at the shortest warning." Hence the Jews thought, as we have said, that they were quite safe. But the Prophet here declares, that they were greatly mistaken; for on account of this wickedness, that is, because they trusted in their unlawful and accursed treaty, and promised themselves peace from their enemies, or thought that they could easily overcome them; *on this account*, he says, *thou shalt go forth:* but nothing could have been less credible to the Jews than what the Prophet said; for as the Egyptians opposed themselves as a wall against the Chaldeans, and were deemed unassailable, who could have otherwise thought but that the Jews would be preserved quiet in their own country? But he says, *Go forth shalt thou, and thine hands on thy head.*[1]

By this gesture he means extreme despair; for women did either strike or extend their arms when any great calamity happened, as we see it done often in the present day; for when a woman, not able to keep within due bounds, either

[1] There are three other expositions of the words rendered by *Calvin*, "on this account." One is that of our version, "from him;" the second is, "from hence," *i.e.*, from Egypt, adopted by *Piscator*, *Grotius*, and *Blayney*; and the third is, "from here," *i.e.*, from this place, their own land; which, as *Gataker* says, is probably "the genuine sense:" it is a threatening, that they were to be led into captivity. The rendering of the *Septuagint* is, "ἐντεῦθεν—from hence," or from this place; of the *Vulgate*, "ab ista—from that," meaning evidently Egypt; of the *Syriac* and *Targum*, "ex hoc—from this;" and of *Arabic*, "illinc—from thence." The particle זֹאת is "this," and not "that."—*Ed.*

loses a husband, or expects some very great calamity, she beats her breast, or raises up her hands, according to what is said here. Jeremiah then mentions this gesture as an evidence of extreme despair; as though he had said, "The treaty which fills the Jews with so much confidence shall be so far from being advantageous to them, that it will, on the contrary, bring on them utter ruin and disgrace."[1]

But the reason which follows ought especially to be observed, *because abhor does Jehovah thy confidences.* The Prophet here shews why he had spoken so severely. It might have appeared that he spoke hyperbolically when he said, that the people were like an abandoned harlot, who rambled here and there in all directions: but the reason here given ought to have been sufficient to take away all evasions, and that is, that they foolishly trusted in those fallacious helps which they knew were condemned by God. Had this been permitted by God, they would not have been so severely reprimanded; but as God had forbidden them to flee to the Egyptians, it was in the first place a disallowed confidence; and in the second place, they thus despised the aid of God, and cast aside, as it were, all his promises: for as their hearts were fixed on the Egyptians, and as they thought that their safety would be secured by them; so their prayer to God became not only cold, but almost wholly extinguished.

We hence see that the Prophet did not exceed due limits when he spoke against the Jews with so much displeasure, and condemned them in such reproachful terms; for they had transferred the glory due to God to the Egyptians, when they considered them to be the authors of their safety; and they had thus despised the promises of God, so that there

[1] "The gesture" mentioned here, a striking example of, we find in 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Many consider the ו here as having the meaning of "with," and render the line as *Blayney* does,—

With thy hands upon thy head.

But more consistent with the genius of the language is to regard the auxiliary verb to be understood,—

And thy hands *shall be* on thy head.

There is a similar phrase in Is. xxxv. 10, which ought to be rendered thus,—

And everlasting joy *shall be* upon their heads.—*Ed.*

was no attention given to prayer: *Abhor, then, does Jehovah thy confidences.*[1]

He then adds, *Thou shalt not prosper in them.* It ought to be carefully observed, that whatever we resolve to do that is not approved by God, cannot possibly succeed; for God will subvert all our hopes. Let us then know that here is set before us the punishment of all unbelievers, who, being not content with God's protection, wander after vain and false objects of trust, and prefer to have men propitious to them rather than God himself. Now follows—

CHAPTER III.

1. They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.

1. Dicendo, si dimiserit vir uxorem suam, et profecta ab eo, fuerit viri alterius, (*id est*, transierit ad alium virum) an revertetur ad eam adhuc? Annon pollutione polluta est terra in hoc? et tu scortata es cum sociis multis; revertere tamen ad me, dicit Jehova.

Many regard this verse as connected with the last, and thus read them connectedly, "God hates false confidences, because he says," &c. But this seems not to me to be suitable; for Jeremiah brings before us here a new subject,—that God seeks to be reconciled to his people, according to what a husband does, who desires to receive into favour an

[1] The verb for "abhor" is מאס, which means to reject, that is, with disdain and contempt; and the same when followed by ב, though often rendered "despise" in our version. It is rendered "reject," without the ב, in 1 Sam. xv. 23; Jer. vii. 29; and "despise" being followed by ב in Jud. ix. 38; Jer. iv. 30. The early versions and the *Targum* mostly differ, and none of them give the specific meaning of the verb, except that the *Septuagint* give its meaning when not followed by ב, "ἀπώσατο—has rejected." The whole verse may be thus rendered,—

37. Also from this place shalt thou go forth,
And thy hands *shall be* on thy head:
For rejected has Jehovah those in whom thou trustest,
And thou shalt not prosper by them.

It is not correct to render מבטחיך, "thy confidences;" for the word means "thy confided ones," it being a Huphal participle. The *Syriac* renders it, "those who afford thee confidence—fiduciam tibi præbentibus." *Blayney's* version is, "the objects of thy trust;" and he translates the verb, "reprobated." That this is its meaning when followed by ב is evident from chap. vi. 30.—*Ed.*

unchaste wife, and is ready to grant her full pardon, and to take her again as a chaste and faithful wife. This verse, then, cannot be connected with the foregoing, in which, as we have seen, the people are condemned. The word לאמר, *lamer*, means the same, as I think, as when we say in French, *par maniere de dire*, or as when it is commonly said, "Suppose a case." For the Prophet does not here introduce God as the speaker, but lays before us a common subject, with this preface, לאמר, *lamer*, that is, "Be it so, that a man divorces his wife, and she becomes allied to another husband, can she again return to her first husband? This is not usually done; but I will surpass whatever kindness there may be among men, for I am ready to receive thee, provided thou wilt in future observe conjugal fidelity, and part with thy adulteries and adulterers."[1]

As to the main point, there is here no ambiguity: for God shews that he would be reconciled to the Jews, provided they proceeded not obstinately in their sinful courses. But in order to set forth more fully his mercy, he uses a comparison which must be a little more attentively considered. He had before said that he held the place of a husband, that the people occupied the station of a wife; and then he complained of the base perfidy of the people, who had forsaken him, and said that they had acted like a wife who, having despised her husband, prostituted herself to such adulterers

[1] The word at the beginning of this verse has puzzled most, the form being so unusual. It is left out by the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*. The *Vulgate* has "vulgo dicitur—it is commonly said." But ל means at times "according to;" and it may be so rendered here,—

According to what is said, If a man sends away his wife,
And she goes from him and becomes another man's,
Is he to return to her again?
Polluted, shall it not be polluted, even that land?
But thou hast played the harlot with many friends,
Yet return to me, saith Jehovah.

The particle הן in the first line is Chaldee for אם: it is so rendered by the *Targum* and the early versions. The pronoun הוא after "land" cannot be rendered as *Calvin* proposes; it agrees in gender with "land." It is singular that the *Septuagint*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Arabic*, have "woman" instead of "land;" yet the *Syriac* and *Targum* retain "land:" but in them all this pronoun is construed with the noun. *Gataker* takes "land" here, and in Deut. xxiv. 4, as meaning "the state," the community, and refers to Num. xxxv. 33; Ps. cvi. 38; Is. xxiv. 5.—*Ed.*

as might happen to meet her: but he now adds, "Behold, if a man dismisses his wife, and she becomes the wife of another, he will never receive her again." And this was forbidden by the law. "But I am ready," he says, "to receive thee, though I had not given thee the usual divorce at my pleasure, as husbands are wont to do who repudiate their wives, when there is anything displeasing in them." It is not a simple comparison, as many think; (I know not whether all think so, for I have not read any who seem to understand the true meaning;) for God does not simply compare himself to a husband who has repudiated his wife for adultery; but as I have already said, there are here two clauses. The Jews were then wont to divorce their wives even for slight causes, and for no cause at all.

Now, God speaks thus by Isaiah, "Shew me the bill of your mother's divorcement," (Is. l. 1;) as though he had said, "I have not repudiated your mother." For if any one then departed from his wife, the law compelled him to take some blame on himself; for what was the bill of divorcement? It was a testimony to the wife's chastity; for if any one was found guilty of adultery, there was no need of divorcement, as it was a capital crime. (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22.) Hence adulteresses were not usually divorced; but if any woman had conducted herself faithfully towards her husband, and he wished to repudiate her, the law constrained him to give her the bill of divorcement: "I repudiate this wife, not because she hath broken or violated the bond of marriage, but because her manners are not agreeable, because her beauty does not please me." Thus the husbands were then commanded to take some of the blame on themselves. Hence the Lord says by Isaiah, "Shew me the bill of your mother's divorcement;" as though he had said, "She has departed from me; she has broken the bond of marriage by her fornications; I am not then in fault for being alienated from you."

God then does not mean in this place, that he had divorced the people; for this would have been wrong and unlawful, and could not have been consistent with the character of God. But as I have already said, there is here a twofold

comparison. "Though a husband should fastidiously send away his wife, and she through his fault should be led to contract another marriage, and become the partner of another, as though in contempt of him, he could hardly ever bear that indignity, and become reconciled to her: but ye have not been repudiated by me, but are like a perfidious woman, who shamefully prostitutes herself to all whom she may meet with; and yet I am ready to receive you, and to forget all your base conduct." We now then understand the import of the words.

In the second clause there is a comparison made from the less to the greater. For the return into favour would have been easier, if the repudiated wife had afterwards become acceptable to him, though she had become the wife of another; but when an adulteress finds her husband so willing of himself, and ready to grant free pardon, it is certainly an example not found among mortals. Thus we see that God, by an argument from the less to the greater, enhances his goodness towards the people, in order to render the Jews the less excusable for rejecting so pertinaciously a favour freely offered to them.

But it may be asked, why the Prophet says, *By pollution shall not this land be polluted,* or, *through this?* I shall speak first of the words, and then refer to the subject. Almost all give this version, "Is not that land by pollution polluted?" But I know not what sense we can elicit by such a rendering, except, it may be, that God compares a divorced wife to the land, or that he, by an abrupt transition, transfers to the land what he had said of a divorced wife, or rather that he explains the metaphor which had been used. If this sense be approved, then the copulative which follows must be rendered as a causative, which all have rendered adversatively, and rightly too, "But thou." I then prefer to read הוֹאֵ, *eeia*, by itself, "by this;" that is, when a wife returns again to her first husband, after having married another; for the law, as we have said, forbad this; and the husband must have become an adulterer, if he took again the wife whom he had repudiated. Liberty was granted to women by divorce; not that divorce was by God allowed;

but as the women were innocent, they were released, for God imputed the fault to the husbands. And when the repudiated wife married another man, this second marriage was considered legitimate. If, then, the first husband sought to recover the wife whom he had divorced, he violated the bond of the second marriage. For this reason, and according to this sense, the Prophet says, that the land would by this become polluted; as though he had said, "It is not lawful for husbands to take back their wives, however ready they may be to forgive them; but I require no other thing but your return to me."

As to the words, we now see that the Prophet does not say without reason, "By this;" that is, when a woman unites herself to one man, and then to another, and afterwards returns to her first husband; for society would thus be torn asunder, and also the sacred bond of marriage, the main thing in the preservation of social order, would be broken.

It is added, *But thou hast played the harlot with many companions.*[1] What we have before observed is here confirmed,—that the people had been guilty, not only of one act of adultery, but that they were become like common strumpets, who prostitute themselves to all without any difference; and this is what will be presently stated. Those whom he calls companions or friends were rivals. He says, *Yet return to me, saith Jehovah:* by which he intimated,—"Pardon is ready for thee, provided thou repentest."

An objection may, however, be here raised,—How could God do what he had forbidden in his law? The answer is obvious,—No other remedy could have been given to preserve order in society when men were allowed to repudiate their wives, except by adding this restraint, as a proof that God did not favour their levity and changeableness. It was thus necessary, for the interest of society, to punish such men as were too morose and rigid, by withholding from them the power of recovering the wives whom they had dismissed.

[1] The *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*, have by a mistake rendered the word "pastors" or shepherds; but the *Vulgate* has "lovers," which our version and *Blayney* have adopted. But the word means companions, friends, intimates, neighbours. *Gataker* renders it "mates."—*Ed.*

It might otherwise have been, that one changed his love the third day, or in a month, or in a year, and demanded his wife. God then intended to put this restraint on divorce, so that no man, who had put away his wife, could take her again. But the case is very different as to God himself: it is therefore nothing strange that he claims for himself the right of being reconciled to the Jews on their repentance. It follows—

2. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with: in the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms, and with thy wickedness.

2. Tolle oculos tuos ad loca excelsa (*hoc est*, ad colles,) et vide ubi non scortata fueris; super vias (*vel*, juxta vias) sedisti illis (*hoc est, ad illos captandos,*) quemadmodum Arabs in deserto; et polluisti terram scortationibus tuis et malitia tua.

As the Prophet had charged the Jews with being wanton in a loose and promiscuous manner, as it is the case with abandoned women, after having cast away all shame, that they might not evade the charge and object, that they were not conscious of any crime, he makes them in a manner the judges themselves, *Raise up*, he says, *thine eyes to the high places and see;* that is, "I bring forward witnesses sufficiently known to thee; there is no hill in the land where thou hast not been connected with idols." We have already said, and we shall find the same thing often mentioned by this Prophet,—that superstitions are deemed idolatries by God. But it was a customary thing with the Jews to ascend high places, as though they were there nearer to God. This is the reason why the Prophet bids them to turn their eyes to all the hills: *See*, he says, whether is there any hill free from thy fornications. For as strumpets seek hiding-places to perpetrate their obscenities, so the Jews sought hills as their brothels. And thus their impiety was the more execrable as they went forth openly, and especially as they wished their flagitious acts to be seen at a distance, ascending, as they did, elevated places; but strumpets, having found adulterers or paramours, are wont to seek some secret retreats. The Prophet then cuts off from the Jews every occasion for evading the charge, when he bids them to raise up their eyes to the high places; for when they prostrated

themselves before their idols, it was the same as when strumpets commit acts of adultery.

And he adds, that they *sat by the ways, as the Arabian in the desert.* He again repeats what we have before observed, —that the Jews were not led away by the enticement of others to violate the conjugal pledge which they had given to God, but were, on the contrary, moved by their own wantonness, so that they of themselves sought base and filthy gratifications. He had before said, "Thou hast corrupted others by thy wickedness;" and now he confirms the same, "Thou hast sat," he says, "by all the ways." This also is what is done by vile strumpets, who, as it has been said, have lost all shame. But the Prophet enhances this crime by another comparison, *As an Arabian in the desert,* who lies in wait for travellers, that he may rob and kill them: thus hast thou *sat by the ways.*[1]

We then see here a double comparison; one taken from strumpets, who having in time past made gain, when they find themselves neglected, besiege the ways, and offer themselves to any they may meet with. This is the first comparison; the other is, that they were like robbers, who lie in wait for travellers; as though he had said, that the Chaldeans and Egyptians were excusable when compared with the Jews, because they had been drawn by their wicked arts into illicit treaties, like a traveller who passing by is enticed by a robber,—"What art thou but a helpless man; but if

[1] *Gataker* suggests another idea,—that the reference is made to the Arabian traders, who fix their tents in the wilderness to wait for the merchants. *Blayney* renders the lines differently,—

Lift up thine eyes upon the open plains, and see;
Where hast thou not been defiled in the highways?
Thou hast sat waiting in them like an Arabian in the desert.

To render שְׁפָיִם, "open plains," is without authority; it means "craggy eminences," or elevated places. See Num. xxiii. 3; Is. xli. 18; Jer. xiv. 6. The division, too, is arbitrary. "The ways," or highways, connects better with the following verb; and לָהֶם is not "in them," but to or for them, that is, her lovers, mentioned in the preceding verse. Our version is the most suitable, with which that of *Calvin* corresponds.

"Arabian" is rendered "crow" by the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*; "robber" by the *Vulgate*, but "Arabian" by the *Targum*. It is true that the word for a crow is from the same root, but the *iod* attached to it shews it to be a proper name. Where the *Vulgate* got the word "robber," it is hard to know.—*Ed.*

thou joinest me, and engagest to be my companion, there is the best prospect of gain, and new spoils will fall into our hands daily." Such a robber is twice and three times more wicked than the other. So also, the Prophet says of the Jews, that they were like old robbers, who had become hardened in intrigues, in plunders, and in every kind of wickedness, and had enticed to themselves both the Egyptians and the Assyrians. It afterwards follows—

3. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.	3. Et prohibitæ sunt pluviæ, et serotina non fuit; et frons mulieris meretricis fuit tibi, recusasti erubescere.

Jeremiah proceeds with his severe reproof,—that the Jews were wholly given to wickedness, for they had altogether devoted themselves to superstitions, and also to unlawful alliances, and had in both instances despised God. He now shews how great and how strong was their obstinacy. *Restrained*, he says, *have been the rains, there has not been the latter rain; yet the front of a harlot has been thine;* as though he had said, that the Jews had not in any degree been subdued by punishment. It was a most atrocious wickedness to give no ear to pious warnings, when the prophets continually cried to them, and endeavoured to restore them to the right way. That they thus hardened themselves against the addresses of the prophets, was a proof of the greatest impiety. But God tried also to restore them to himself by punishments, and those very heavy. He punished them with sterility; and the drought of which the Prophet speaks was no doubt so uncommon, that the Jews might perceive, had they a particle of a sound mind, that God was at war with them. It often happens that not a drop of rain falls from heaven; for we see that many summers are hot and dry: there is no doubt but that God then reminds us of our sins and exhorts us to repent. But as familiarity makes us to overlook God's judgments, he sometimes punishes us in a new and unusual manner. I doubt not then but that the Prophet, by saying, *Restrained have been rains* from them, refers to some extraordinary instance of God's vengeance, whereby the Jews might have perceived, except

they were extremely besotted, that God was opposed to and displeased with them.[1]

The import of what is said is,—that the Jews had not only run here and there through a mad impulse, according to their own wills and inclinations, but that they had also been checked by evident judgments, since God had from heaven openly shewed himself to be the vindicator of his own glory, and as there had been so great a drought, that it appeared clear that the curse of the law had been fulfilled towards them, "I will make heaven iron to you, and the earth brass." (Lev. xxvi. 19.)

As to the latter rain, we have said elsewhere that by this word is meant the rain which falls just before harvest; and it is called "latter" with reference to the harvest. For, as there is great heat in those eastern parts, they want rain before the harvest commences; the extreme heat of the sun would otherwise scorch up the grain. Hence, they especially look for the latter rain, which comes shortly before harvest-time. The other rain, in September and October, is called, on account of the sowing-time, a seasonable rain; for it soaks and moistens the seed, that it may strike roots and gather vigour and strength. The object is to shew, that God had from heaven given to the Jews manifest tokens of his displeasure, and yet without any benefit; for they had the front of a harlot, and felt no shame; that is, they were moved by no judgments of God, and could not bear to be corrected.

[1] It is usual to render the ו before "restrained," "therefore;" but the sentence will read better, connected as it is with the latter part of the previous verse, by giving it its most common meaning,—

And restrained have been the showers,
And the latter rain has not been;
Yet the front of a wanton woman hast thou had,
Thou hast refused to be made ashamed.

This last verb is in the Infinitive Huphal. It means in Hiphil, to make ashamed; and then in Huphal, to be made ashamed. The *Targum* expresses thus the general sense of the last line, "Thou hast been unwilling to humble thyself." The rest of the verse is rendered almost literally. The *Septuagint* and the *Arabic* wander very far from the Hebrew. The *Vulgate* is a literal version, and the *Syriac* is nearly so, only it connects "wickedness," in the last verse, with "restrained," thus,—

And for thy wickedness have been restrained the dews.

And it is not improbable but that this was the original reading.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been once pleased not only to adopt us as thy children, but also to unite us to thyself by the bond of marriage, and to give us a pledge of this sacred union in thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we may continue in the faith of thy Gospel, and so honestly keep the pledge given to thee, that thou mayest also shew thyself to us as a Husband and as a Father, and that we may to the end find in thee that merciful kindness which is needful to retain us in the holy fear of thy name, until we shall at length enjoy fellowship with thee in thy celestial kingdom, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Eleventh.

4. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou *art* the guide of my youth?

4. An non posthac clamabis ad me, Pater mi, dux adolescentiæ meæ tu es?

God, after having set forth the wickedness of his people, and severely reproved them as they deserved, now kindly invites them to repentance, *Wilt thou not say to me hereafter*, he says, *My Father!* Some incorrectly render the words, "Wilt thou say to me, My Father," as though God would reject what they said: and they give the meaning,—that the Jews would act dishonestly in thus glorying in God's name, from whom they were so alienated. But very different is the meaning of the Prophet: for God mitigates the severity of the reproof which we have observed, and shews that he would be ready to be reconciled to them, if they repented: nay, he waits not for their repentance, but of his own accord meets and allures these perfidious apostates: "What!" says God, "shall there be no more any union between us?" For God expresses here the feeling of one grieving and lamenting, when he saw the people perishing; and he seems anxious, if possible, to restore them.

It is with this design that he asks, "Will they not again call on me as their Father and the guide of their youth?" And by this periphrastic way of speaking, he intimates that he was the husband of that people; for most tender is that love which a youth has for a young virgin in the flower of

her age. God, then, makes use now of this comparison, and says, that he still remembered the love which he had manifested towards his people. In short, he shews here that pardon was ready, if the people sought reconciliation ; and he confirms the same thing when he adds—

5. Will he reserve *his anger* for ever? will he keep *it* to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.	5. An observabit in seculum? an custodiet in perpetuum? Ecce, loquuta es, et perpetrasti malitias (*vel*, scelera) et potuisti.

God shews that it was the fault of the Jews, that he did not receive them into favour. And here he takes the argument from his own nature, and speaks of himself in the third person ; and it is the same as though the Prophet had interposed this reasoning, "God is not inexorable, for he is as ready to forgive as he is long-suffering: now, then, what prevents you from living happily again under his government? for he will spare you, provided he finds in you genuine repentance." We now then see, what the Prophet means here: for as God had kindly exhorted the people to repent, the Prophet speaks now generally of God's own nature,—that *he keeps not for ever, nor reserves perpetually.*

These words, when put alone, mean that he does not cherish vengeance, and in our language we imitate the Hebrews, *Il lui garde.* This *garde*, when put without anything added to it, means, as I have said, that vengeance is cherished within. But nothing is more contrary than this to the nature of God. It hence follows, that the Jews had no obstacle in their way, except that they shunned God, and that being addicted to their own vices, they were unwilling to receive the pardon that was freely offered to them.

As to the second clause, it admits of being explained in two ways. We may regard an adversative particle to be understood, "though thou hast spoken and hast done," &c. ; as if God had said, that he would be propitious to the Jews, however atrociously they might have sinned. But another view is more simple,—that God here complains that there was no hope of amendment, as they had become hardened in their vices, "Thou hast spoken," he says, "thou hast done, and thou hast been able." And interpreters further vary

in their views: for the copulative is explained by some as a particle of comparison, in the sense of כאשר, *keasher*, "according to what thou wert able, thou hast done wickedness." But others take the words more simply and more correctly, as I think, "Thou hast been very strong;" that is, thou hast exerted all thy power, so that thou hast put forth all thy strength in doing evil, as we say in Latin, *pro virili*, with all thy might; that is, as far as thy capacity extended, thou hast devoted thyself to wickedness.[1]

I therefore give this explanation: God had before put on, as it were, the character of one in grief and sorrow, and kindly exhorted the people to repent, and testified that he would be ready to pardon them, and at the same time shewed in general that he would be propitious, as he is by nature inclined to mercy. After having set forth these things, he now adds, that he despaired of that people, because they gloried in their own wickedness: for to speak and to do means the same as if he had said, that the people were so impudent, that they boasted of their rebellion against God,

[1] This and the preceding verse have been variously explained. The view given by *Calvin* has been most commonly adopted; but it is hardly consistent with a literal rendering of the original, which I consider to be as follows,—

4. Hast thou not from this time called to me,
"My Father, the guide of my youth art thou:
5. Will he reserve *wrath* for ever,
Or keep *it* to the end?"
Behold, thou hast *so* spoken,
And hast done evils and persevered.

"From this time," that is, the time spoken of before, when the people followed idolatry. During this time, they called God their Father, and promised themselves the remittance of his displeasure. They said this, and yet followed their superstitions. This is the view which *Gataker* seemed most disposed to take. *Horsley* thus paraphrases the last line,—

"Thou hast persisted incorrigibly in doing evil."

The *Septuagint* give "called," in the past tense; the *Vulgate*, in the imperative, "voca—call;" the *Syriac*, the *Arabic*, and the *Targum*, in the future tense, "Wilt thou not call," &c. The received text has קראתי, which is no doubt wrong; the *iod* is not found in very many MSS., and all the early versions agree in giving the verb in the second person. The same is to be said of רברתי, it ought to be דברת, though *Horsley* prefers the former; but neither the early versions nor the context favour it. The phrase מעתה is rendered by the *Septuagint*, "ὡς οἰκίαν—as a house," and by the *Arabic*, "ut filia—as a daughter." How such mistakes could have been made, it is difficult to say. The *Syriac* has "hereafter;" and the *Targum*, "from this time."—*Ed.*

and dared to call darkness light; for the superstitious, we know, glory against God without any shame. Now, such was the state of the people; for God, by his prophets, condemned this especially in them—that they had corrupted the pure worship of the law; but they with a meretricious front dared to set up against him their own devotions and good intentions, as they are commonly called. As then, they thus presumptuously defended their wicked deeds, God here complains that they were in no way healable, and so he leaves them as past remedy. This I regard as the real meaning of the Prophet: and of similar import is the verb תוכל, *tucal*; "thou hast put forth all thy might," he says, that is, thou hast observed no limits in sinning, but, on the contrary, hast given thyself up to unbridled licentiousness. It now follows—

6. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen *that* which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

7. And I said, after she had done all these *things*, Turn thou unto me: but she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*.

8. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

6. Et dixit Jehova ad me in diebus Josiæ regis, An vidisti quid fecerit aversatrix (*alii vertunt*, rebellis) Israel? Profecta est ipsa super omnem montem excelsum, et subtus omnem arborem frondosam, et scortata est illic:

7. Et dixi, Post facere ipsam (*hoc est*, postquam fecit omnia hæc,) Ad me revertere (*alii in tertia persona reddunt*, Revertatur;) et non reversa est: et vidit perfida ejus soror Jehudah.

8. Et vidi, quòd super his omnibus (*hoc est*, quòd propter hæc, *nempe* אדות *significat occasiones vel causas*,) quia scortata erat rebellis Israel, dimiserim ipsam (repudiaverim,) et dederim librum repudiorum ejus (repudii ejus) illi, et non timuit perfida Jehudah soror ejus, et scortata est etiam ipsa.

Here the Prophet enters on a new discourse: he relates what God had committed to him, and mentions the time, even in the reign of Josiah. It is indeed well known, that the land was then cleansed from superstitions; for that pious king laboured to restore the true worship of God, and to remove all the filth and defilements, by which the temple and the whole of religion had been corrupted. He strenuously exerted himself, and no doubt there was an improved appearance of religion throughout the land; but we shall see that

a great portion of the people were under the influence of hypocrisy and deceit, as it is usually the case when rulers seek to support the pure worship of God, and to free it from all corruptions; for there are many hypocrites, who for a time dissemble, while the same antipathy to God still remains. Such was then the condition of the people.

And this ought to be carefully observed; for Jeremiah might have appeared to have dealt somewhat too sharply and rigorously with his own nation, as reform was in the mouth of all, according to what we find to be the case with many now, who having left the superstitions of the Papacy, seemed at first to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, but all now wish to be satisfied with any kind of reformation; at the same time, they shake off the yoke of Christ and can bear submission to no discipline: in short, their object is to subvert all order; and yet they boldly claim to be the advocates of reformation, whenever their impiety is reproved. This was no doubt the contest which Jeremiah had to carry on, the same with that by which the Lord tries his servants at this day. He therefore says, that he received this commission *in the days of Josiah*, that is, when that king was labouring to establish the pure worship of God, and no one dared to oppose; for we find that God was then worshipped by the whole people without any external corruptions.

But what is contained in this commission? *Hast thou seen*, he says, *what apostate Israel hath done?* God here compares the ten tribes with the tribe of Judah, with whom was united, as it is well known, the half tribe of Benjamin: he then compares Israel with the tribe of Judah, "Do you not see what rebellious Israel hath done?" But he introduces the kingdom of Israel, as well as the kingdom of Judah, under the character of women; for God, as it has already appeared, represents himself as the husband of his people. He then says that he had two wives, even Israel and Judah. God had indeed espoused to himself the whole seed of Abraham by one contract; but Jeremiah speaks here in a popular manner. Though the Israelites had departed from God, yet he had not wholly rejected them. The kingdom of Israel had then become adulterous; but God for

a time bore with that sin, so that the covenant, in part, remained. For this reason he acknowledges as his wives both Israel and Judah. Hence he says, "Hast thou not seen what estranged Israel hath done?" The word משבה, *meshibe*, is derived from שוב, *shub*, which signifies, both to return and to depart; and *Jerome* everywhere renders it *aversatrix*, one who turns aside, or is estranged.[1] But some render it "rebellious;" we might say more correctly in French, *debauchée*. *She went*, he says, *on every high hill, and under every shady tree, and there played the harlot.* In short, God complains that the ten tribes had violated the sacred bond of marriage, when they prostituted themselves to idols, even on all high hills and under all shady trees: for as I have already said, they chose those places as though there was some holiness both on mountains and under shades of trees.

He afterwards adds, *Yet I said;* God here states, that he had long suspended his judgment before he punished the people of Israel. He then extols here his patience, that he had not immediately visited the Israelites as they deserved, but bore with them and for a long time waited to see whether they could be reclaimed: *I said*, then, *after she had done all these things, Return to me.* If we read in the third person, the sense will be the same, "I hoped indeed that they would return to the right way, though they had thus fallen away, yea though they had denied me by an impious defection, and had become alienated from the faith and from piety." But I am more inclined to another view,—that God here records the fact, that he had recalled to himself the ten tribes by his servants the Prophets, though they had by their many crimes provoked his wrath. Here then God shews how perverse the Israelites had been; for he had tried to restore them, if possible, to himself, but had spent all his labour in vain. I thus explain, *I said*, of the prophetic instruction: "Though then the Israelites had plunged them-

[1] It is correctly rendered as a noun, for had it been an adjective or a participle, it would have followed the word Israel. Literally it is, "the apostatess,"—

Hast thou seen what she did, the apostatess Israel?

Or, it may be rendered, "the backslider Israel," though the word is deficient, having no feminine termination.—*Ed.*

selves into impieties, I yet ceased not to try whether they could be restored to me." He intimates, in short, that he had been unlike those husbands, who will not be reconciled to their wives, burning with jealousy, because they see that they had been exposed to so much disgrace. God then shews that though the Israelites had departed from him, he yet sent his prophets, and of his own free will sought reconciliation with them, but that they had refused to return.[1]

He then adds, *See did she*, that is, the whole kingdom of Judah, that, for all this, because the *rebellious Israel had played the harlot*, &c. We shall hereafter find the design of this comparison; for he amplifies the sin of the kingdom of Judah, inasmuch she had time enough to observe what he now relates, and was able to see it at a distance as it were from a watchtower; yet she saw it without any advantage. God then intended to shew how great was the hardness of the Jews, who had seen the defection of the ten tribes, and had seen how severely they had been reproved by the prophets.

He then says, *And I saw*. As he had said that the kingdom of Judah had seen what happened to Israel, so he now

[1] The difficulty at the beginning of the eighth verse may be removed either by adopting וראה, as in two MSS., and taking the verb to be in Hiphil, or ותרא, as in one MS., as a repetition of the former verb, according to the *Syriac*. It is left out in the *Vulgate*. But it is most suitable to the context to take the verb to be in Hiphil. Then the passage would read thus,—

6. Hast thou not seen what she did, the apostate Israel?
Go did she on every high hill and under every green tree,
And play there the harlot:
7. And I said, after she had done all these things,
"To me return;" but she returned not:
And see this did the hypocrite, her sister Judah:
8. And I caused her to see, that on all these accounts,
As adultery the apostate Israel would commit,
I dismissed her, and gave to her
The bill of her divorcement;
Yet fear not, did the hypocrite Judah, her sister,
But went and played the harlot, even herself.

"On all these accounts," or, for all these reasons, refers to several things —the first apostasy—God's invitation—and Israel's refusal. God caused Judah to see these things by his prophets, but Judah feared not. The word בגדה, hypocrite, or the perfidious one, is a feminine participle, used as a noun. It is explained in the tenth verse by "feignedly" or falsely. Hypocritess would be the correct rendering. It is rendered by the *Septuagint*, "faithless—ἀσύνθετος,"—by the *Vulgate*, "prevaricatress—prævaricatrix,"—and by the *Targum*, "falsifier" or cheat.—*Ed.*

says, that he had seen both, *See* then *did I.* Now, what does he declare that he had seen? Even that Judah had played the harlot; for he now speaks of Judah as of a woman. Then God says, that it was not a thing hid from him that Judah had surpassed the crimes of her sister, not through ignorance or deception, but through deliberate wickedness: See, he says, *did I,* that notwithstanding *all these things,* she *played the harlot.* He thus explains more fully what he had briefly touched upon before. He had said, that Judah had seen, but this on account of its brevity might have appeared ambiguous: he therefore explains it more at large; "*See did* Judah that I gave a bill of divorcement to her sister, because she had played the harlot; and yet she feared not;" that is, she thought not of repenting, when she had such a striking example of vengeance set before her eyes.

But it may be here asked, how could it be said that a bill of divorce had been given to the Israelites, when he denies by the Prophet Isaiah that he had given it? (Is. l. 1.) But the Prophet here takes another view of the subject; for he does not speak here of the bills of divorce, such as were usually given, when a husband repudiated a wife who had been chaste and faithful; but he speaks of that lawful divorce, when a woman, convicted of adultery, is liable to a capital punishment. God then by his prophet Isaiah denies that he had given a bill of divorcement; but he says here that he had given it, because he had repudiated an adulterous woman. It was not indeed at that time customary among the Jews to divorce an adulteress, for she was led to execution. But we have seen at the beginning of the chapter that there is a difference between God and husbands. As then God did not deal, as he might have justly done, with the Israelites, and did not execute a capital punishment, as he might rightly have done, and what was usually done, he says that he had *given a bill of divorce,* that is, that he had repudiated that people. But by the bill of divorce he means exile; for when the ten tribes were banished, it was the same as though God openly shewed that he had no connection with that people: as long as they continued in the holy land and in the promised inheritance, some kind of

union remained; but when they were dispersed here and there, and every sort of worship had ceased among them, and also when the very kingdom of Israel had no longer an existence, God had then divorced them.

See then *did her sister Judah,* and she *feared not.* It was indeed an instance of great insensibility, not to learn wisdom at the expense of others; and it is a complaint found everywhere in the prophets,—that the Jews were not stimulated to repentance, while God spared them, and at the same time set before them examples which ought in all reason to have terrified them. For what ought they to have considered, but that God would punish those many transgressions by which they provoked his wrath, since he had not spared their brethren? They saw that the kingdom of Israel had been abolished, and yet all of them derived their origin from the same father, even Abraham: how was it then that they so heedlessly despised God's judgment, which had been for a long time before their eyes? Hence he complains that they *feared not.* It now follows—

9. And it came to pass, through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

9. Et factum est à velocitate (*vertuht tam Hieronymus quàm alii interpretes,* facilitatem; *nomen deductum est a* קלל, *quod significat interdum esse velocem; hic levitas notatur, vel petulantia,* factum est, *igitur,* a levitate, *aut* petulantia) scortationum ejus, ut polluëret terram (*vel,* contaminaret; *alii vertunt,* peccare faceret; *sed Hieronymus ubique fërè reddit hoc verbum per contaminare, neque malè quadrat,*) et scortata est cum lapide et cum ligno.

Here the Prophet completes his charge,—that so far was it that the punishment which God had inflicted on the Israelites, had any effect on the tribe of Judah, that she surpassed by her levity and lustfulness the whoredoms of her sister. *She has polluted,* he says, *the land,* or made the land to sin, that is, rendered the land guilty. It is indeed what greatly exaggerates the crime, when it is said that the land became guilty or contaminated. The land, we know, was in itself pure, and could contract no pollution from the vices of men; but that the impiety of men might be exhibited the more detestable, the land is said to have been contaminated by them:

Or, it may be said that the land was made guilty. How so? The reason why they are said to have contaminated the land or to have made it guilty or to have implicated it in their own vices, he gives in these words, she has *played the harlot with stone and with wood.*[1] Of this metaphor of playing the harlot it is not necessary now to speak; for we have said already, that this similitude is often repeated, because God had united that people to himself and bound them to him, as it were, by the sacred bond of marriage. Hence whenever the people departed from the pure worship of God, they were justly said to have played the harlot, for they violated their pledged faith: as simplicity of faith is spiritual chastity, so apostasy is that shamelessness and perfidy, when a wife becomes unfaithful to her husband by following adulterers. It afterwards follows—

10. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.

10. Atque etiam in toto hoc (*vel*, in his omnibus) non reversa est ad me perfida (*vel*, fraudulenta; בגד *est fraudare*) soror ejus Jehudah in toto corde suo, sed in mendacio, inquit Jehova.

He goes on with the same subject,—that the Jews were not moved by any fear when they saw the dreadful vengeance executed on their brethren on account of their sins. *Her perfidious sister*, he says, *returned not to me*, that is, after so many warnings by the prophets and such an example of punishment. He however adds an explanation,—she *turned not with her whole heart, but feignedly* and falsely.[2]

[1] This verse may be thus rendered,—

And it was, that through the report of her fornication,
She polluted the land;
And she committed adultery with stone and wood.

There is no instance of קל, in the sense of swiftness, &c., being used as a noun. It is the Chaldee for קול, voice, fame, report. *Gataker* paraphrases the words thus, "by her notorious fornication." The early versions and the *Targum* all differ. Excessive addiction to idolatry is evidently what is spoken of.—*Ed.*

[2] This verse stands connected, not with the preceding, but with the eighth,—

Yea, even for all this,
Return to me did not the hypocrite,
Her sister Judah, with all her heart,
But in falsehood, saith Jehovah.

"In falsehood," or, by dealing falsely, as it may be taken by a participle preceded by a preposition.—*Ed.*

The Prophet anticipates here such objections as the Jews might have alleged, "What! thou deniest that we have returned! Is not the whole land cleansed from idolatries? Is not God worshipped according to the requirements of the law? Is there any more an altar seen under the shades of trees or on hills?" As then they might have thus evaded the charge as they usually did, the Prophet obviates such an evasion and says, "Though they have in appearance given some tokens of repentance, yet they have only put on a disguise and have acted falsely towards God; for there is no integrity in them." We now more clearly see why he had before specifically mentioned the time of Josiah; for the Jews then returned feignedly to God: there was in the king and in a few a right feeling, but in the rest dissimulation only. God then in a few words shews, that he cares not for that reformation which is false and feigned, but that he requires a genuine feeling within: hence he thus concludes—

11. And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

11. Et dixit Jehova ad me, justificavit animam suam aversatrix Israel præ fraudulenta Jehuda (*vel*, perfida, *semper est* בגדה.)

We now see more clearly for what purpose Jeremiah compared the ten tribes with the kingdom of Judah; it was done in order to shew that the Jews, who wished to be deemed far more holy than others, were yet more perfidious and deserved a heavier punishment, because they acted so deceitfully with God.

It may be here asked, why he pronounces the Jews worse than the Israelites, while they still continued in a sort of middle state of things. We indeed know that the kingdom of Judah was become so corrupt, that hardly any religion remained there; yet the temple was still standing and the priesthood still existed at Jerusalem. But the Prophet condemns the Jews more than the Israelites for other reasons, even because they ought to have become wise through the calamities of others, and they ought to have been confirmed in true religion when they saw their brethren falling away from the pure worship of God: these things they ought to have maturely considered. It was this supine sottishness

that rendered them worse than all their brethren, and also their pride, the chief cause of their condemnation, for they boasted that they remained perfect, while the ten tribes had become degenerated. These were the reasons why he says that Israel, though a perfidious woman, was yet more righteous than her sister Judah.

The language indeed is not to be strictly taken when it is said, that she *justified her soul;* for God does not here excuse the Israelites, nor does he free or absolve them from guilt, (for he had severely punished them;) but this way of speaking is commonly used by the prophets;—Sodom was righteous in comparison with Jerusalem; and Tyre and Sidon were just when compared with the Jews. (Ezek. xvi. 47, 48.) *Justified* then *has she her soul,*[1] even the *treacherous* or the apostate *Israel, in comparison with the perfidious Judah;* that is, for the reasons which I have stated. The obstinacy of the Jews was greater and less excusable: the external worship of God, which they had retained, ought to have been a bridle to check them; and they had also seen how severe a judge God had been towards the ten tribes; but the judgments of God they despised, and derived no benefit from them.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast deigned to adopt us as thy people, and to unite us to thyself in thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we may continue pure and chaste in our obedience to thy Gospel, and never turn aside to those corruptions which disunite that sacred bond of union, which has been confirmed between us by the blood of thy Son, but that we may so persevere in serving thee, that our whole life and all our actions may be evidences of that holy calling, by which is laid up for us the hope

[1] This is the literal expression, but the word נַפְשָׁהּ is often taken for oneself, and ought often to be so rendered. See Num. xxx. 5; Job xviii. 4; Ps. vii. 2; God is said to swear by his soul, that is, by himself, Amos vi. 8.—

Then said Jehovah to me,—
Justified herself hath apostate Israel,
More than the hypocrite Judah.

Manifest and open apostasy is more honest than the double dealing of hypocrites, who combine God's worship with idolatry; nor is it so hateful to God.—*Ed.*

of eternal salvation, until we shall at length come into the possession of that kingdom which has been obtained for us by so great a price, and there enjoy the fruit of our faith, sincerity, and perseverance, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twelfth.

12. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, *and* I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I *am* merciful, saith the Lord, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever.

12. Vade et clama (*hoc est*, cum clamore intona) sermones hos versus Aquilonem, et dic, Revertere rebellis Israel, dicit Jehova: non, non faciam incumbere (cadere, *ad verbum*) iram meam (*alii vertunt*, faciem meam; *sed metaphoricè significat* iram) in vos, quia clemens ego, dicit Jehova, non servabo in seculum.

The Prophet, after having shewn that the tribe of Judah deserved a heavier punishment than the ten tribes, and having mentioned the cause, that they had seen their brethren severely chastised and were not moved, now turns his discourse to the Israelites themselves, or the ten tribes, and promises that God would be propitious to them. The kingdom of Israel had now been overthrown, and the people had been banished into Assyria, Persia, and Media. They had been scattered, and the name of the kingdom had been obliterated. The land had been often laid waste and the kingdom partly existed, as four tribes only were first driven to exile; but at length the very name of a kingdom ceased to exist, and they were all, as I have said, led away into captivity. Hence the Prophet is bidden to address his words towards the north; for though the greater part of the people dwelt then in the east, yet as they had been banished by the Assyrians, God had a regard to the capital of the monarchy in bidding the Prophet to address those whom the enemies had led away to the north.

Cry, then, not so much on account of the distance of the place, but that the Jews, who were deaf, might hear him crying; for the Prophet was bidden to speak not only for the sake of the Israelites, but that through them he might set before the Jews the mercy of God, if only they returned to a sound mind. Now the import of the whole is,—that though the Israelites had been rebellious and had turned

away from God, yet pardon was ready for them, if they returned. What the Prophet means by the word *return*, we have already in part explained, and we shall have to speak on the subject more fully elsewhere. He then requires repentance, and promises that God would be propitious to them in case they returned to him.

He afterwards adds, *I will not make my face*, or rather, my wrath, *to fall upon you;* for this latter meaning is the most appropriate. God had already severely punished their sins; for what can happen to a people more grievous than to be banished from their own country, and then to be oppressed by cruel tyranny? They yet suffered a heavier punishment; for the worship according to the Law had been taken away from them, they had been repudiated by God, they had lost that glory by which they thought that they excelled all other nations in having been chosen as God's peculiar people. All these things had been entirely lost. In what sense then does God declare that he would not be angry with them? By this way of speaking the Prophet simply means, that God would not be irreconcilable, as though he had said, "My wrath shall not dwell, or shall not lie upon you; but I will mitigate the punishment which I have inflicted." Hence I do not disapprove of Jerome's rendering, "I will not make steady," (*firmabo;*) though when he adds "face," he does not sufficiently set forth the meaning of the Prophet. But this may be admitted, "I will not make steady my wrath upon you;" that is, "My wrath shall not lie or dwell on your heads, so as wholly to overwhelm you." God's wrath had already fallen upon them, but in such a way that there was still some hope of deliverance. God then denies, that the calamities, by which he had chastised their sins, would be fatal, for he would withdraw his hand and not pursue them to the last extremity.

The meaning then is,—that if the people returned to God they would obtain pardon, because God of his own free will invited them and promised that the punishment which he had inflicted on account of their sins, would be only for a time.[1]

[1] 12. Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say,—
Return, apostate Israel, saith Jehovah:
I will not cause my wrath to fall on you,

God further confirms this truth by mentioning what his nature is, *for merciful am I, and I will not retain* wrath *for ever.* The promise was special in case the people returned; God now adds a general truth by way of confirmation,—that he was disposed to shew mercy, and that he would readily forgive for his mercy's sake. Since God then is such, and cannot deny himself, there is no reason why a sinner should despair and thus close up the way, that he should not in his penitence implore God's mercy.

We may hence gather a profitable doctrine,—that whenever unbelief lays hold on our minds, so that we cannot apply to our benefit the promises of God, this should ever be remembered by us—that God is merciful. As God then is so gracious, that he reserves not wrath for ever, but that it is only for a time, we ought to entertain hope; and corresponding with this is what is said in the Psalms, "A moment *is he* in his wrath; and life *is* in his goodness and mercy," (Ps. xxx. 5;) as though he had said, that God's wrath soon passes away, provided we repent, but that he shews his mercy through all ages; for this is what is meant by the word "life." He then goes on—

13. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord.

13. Tantummodo (*vel*, atqui) cognosce iniquitatem tuam, quia adversus Jehovam Deum tuum scelerate egisti, et dispersisti (*vel*, dissipasti, *aut*, prostituisti) vias tuas alienis, sub omni arbore frondosa, et vocem meam non audivisti, inquit Jehova.

For merciful am I, saith Jehovah;
I will not reserve *it* for ever.

That פָּנִים, commonly rendered "face," means sometimes wrath or anger, is evident, see Ps. xxi. 9; Lam. iv. 16. God is said to have his face against the wicked, Ps. xxxiv. 16, and to make his face to shine on his people, Ps. lxxx. 3. This accounts for the word being taken sometimes, as it were, in a bad sense: He has an angry as well as a smiling face.

The rendering of the *Septuagint* is, "I will not set firm (στηριῶ) my face upon you,"—of the *Vulgate*, "I will not turn away my face from you,"—of the *Syriac* and *Arabic*, "I will not harden my face against you,"—and of the *Targum*, "I will not send my wrath upon you." The last comes nearest to the Hebrew.

Blayney's version is a paraphrase,—

I will not look down upon you with a lowering brow;

and so is his version of the last line,—

I will not keep displeasure in view for ever.

Our version in both instances is much to be preferred.—*Ed.*

God lays down here a condition, lest hypocrites, relying on his goodness, should become more and more hardened, and yet think that he is bound as it were to them; for they usually reason thus,—"God is so kind that he recalls us to himself, and of his own free will invites even sinners; we may therefore easily settle matters with him." Thus hypocrites by false thoughts delude themselves, thinking that they can elude God, since he seeks nothing else but to restore sinners to himself. Hence with the promise of favour there ought ever to be connected an exhortation to repentance. God then reminds here the Israelites, that they were greatly deceived, if they thought they could without any difficulty obtain pardon.

Hence he says, *know thine iniquity.* The particle אַךְ, *ak*, may be rendered only, or but, or yet. I prefer the second meaning, *but;* for an exception, as I have said, is here added, lest the Israelites slumbered in their vices, if they persuaded themselves that God was, as it were, in their power and subject to their will. We hence see that the Prophet, modifying what he had said, introduces this sentence, "*But* in the meantime *know thine iniquity*, otherwise thou canst expect no peace with God." Then these words follow, *because thou hast acted wickedly against Jehovah thy God.* By these words the Prophet proves that the Israelites were guilty, lest they supposed that they could by evasions escape the wrath of God; for we know that often, even those who are conscious of their guilt, are not willing to confess their sins; and it is strange that men are so besotted as ever to contend with God. On this account the Prophets, when they exhorted the people to repent, at the same time brought to light their sins. Were there in men frankness and honesty, there would be no need thus to charge them; but as they either boldly deny their sins, or are so callous as to be moved by no fear, it is necessary to prick them sharply and even deeply to wound them. This is what the Prophet now does; *Thou*, he says, *hast done wickedly against thy God;* as though he had said, "I do not now in vain remind thee to own thy sins, for God himself condemns thee: think not thou that thou canst gain anything by thy subterfuges."

He mentions also particulars, that he might come into closer quarters with them, *Thou hast dispersed*, he says, or scattered, *thy ways to strangers, under every shady tree.* He again compares the Israelites to strumpets, who commonly so prostitute themselves, that they ramble from one place to another, invite and allure all they meet with. The Prophet then says, that the Israelites had thus dispersed themselves. He speaks delicately on an indelicate subject. But what he means is, that the Israelites were not content with one kind of superstition or with one idol, but blended together as many superstitions as they could, and borrowed false notions from all quarters: they were like a rambling strumpet, who prostitutes herself to all men indifferently. And *strangers* he calls all their fictitious gods; for as I have often said, they ought to have regarded him as their husband. When therefore the Israelites turned away to other gods, they became like a woman, who leaves her husband and prostitutes herself to any she can find. It is indeed a most common thing for those who forsake the true worship of God to seek for themselves various errors from all quarters, and to abandon themselves unreservedly to all kinds of superstitions.

He at length adds, *And thou hast not hearkened to my voice.* By this fact the Prophet enhances their sin; for they had been instructed in the doctrine of the law, and understood the right way of salvation: how then was it that they thus polluted themselves with so many superstitions? It could not have been attributed to ignorance. It was then their manifest rebellion against God. The Prophet then shews that they had been disobedient and intractable, and that they had relapsed into idolatry and pernicious errors, because they had shaken off the yoke of God, and suffered not themselves to be ruled and guided by his word.[1]

[1] But yet know thine iniquity,
That against Jehovah thy God hast thou rebelled;
For thou hast diversified thy ways for strangers,
Under every green tree;
And to my voice ye hearkened not, saith Jehovah.

The word אך is rendered by the early versions and the *Targum*, But, or But yet, or Nevertheless. "Verum," "Verumtamen." The third line is thus explained by *Parkhurst*, "Thou hast run after *various* heathen na-

We now then perceive the meaning of this verse: God *first* requires a confession of sins from the Israelites; and thus he sets forth how available that return would be which he had previously mentioned; for until a sinner knows his sinfulness, he will never really and from the heart return to God, as the beginning of repentance is the confession of guilt. He *then* proves them to have been guilty, that he might cut off from them every pretence for evasion. He mentions in the *third* place specific sins, that he might hold them as it were fast bound, even that they had polluted themselves with superstitions, and that they had become, not only like an adulterous woman who follows another man, but also like filthy strumpets, who run here and there and make no difference between men known or unknown. He shews in the *last* place, that all this happened through mere obstinacy; for they had cast aside every regard for God, though he had given them his law, and sent the prophets as its faithful interpreters, so that they understood what God approved and what was just and right. The reason then why they went astray was, that they closed their ears to God's word, and suffered not themselves to be ruled by it, but became wholly unteachable. Let us go on—

14. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

14. Revertimini filii rebelles, dicit Jehova, quoniam ego maritus vester (*vel*, dominatus sum in vobis, *ut alii vertunt; alii*, tædio affectus sum in vobis; *dicemus postea de hoc verbo*,) et assumam vos, unum è civitate, et duos è familia (*vel*, cognatione, *vel*, tribu,) et adducam vos in Sion.

Jeremiah repeats the same thing in other words; but God by so many words shews clearer how ready he would be to grant pardon, provided the Israelites really repented. It would have been enough for God to testify once, that he would be reconcilable, but seeing that they were slow and hard to believe, he proceeds in the same strain. It is a wonderful forbearance and kindness that God, finding his favour neglected, and as it were rejected through the sloth of men, should yet

tions in their *several* idolatries." And this they did, while they refused to attend to the voice of God. To attend to, rather than to obey, is what is meant. So the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac*, "My voice ye heard not," or, as the former, "thou didst not hear."—*Ed.*

persevere, and invite them again and again. What man would thus patiently bear the loathing of his favour and kindness? But we see that God does not immediately reject the tardy and the slothful, but adds new stimulants that he might at length move them, though this may seem more than necessary. How great is our torpidity? Were not God daily to urge us, how little attention would any of us give to his admonitions? It is, therefore, no wonder that he, pardoning our tardiness, should again and again invite us to repentance; which we find is done continually in the Church.

This, then, is the reason why the Prophet now repeats the same thing, *Return*, now, *ye rebellious children;* for he had said before, "Return, thou rebellious Israel." He then adds, *For I am a husband to you.* Some regard בעל, *bol*, in the sense of being wearied, when found as here, בעלתי בכם, *bolti bekem*, "I have been wearied by you:" but this meaning does not comport with this passage.[1] More correctly, then, have others rendered the words, "I am lord to you:" but this lord is not to be taken indefinitely as in Latin, for it properly means a husband, who is a lord to his wife. God, then, no doubt, continues the same comparison, that of a marriage, which has already been often mentioned; for he charges the Israelites with adultery, because they had departed from him. Hence it is that he says, *I am your husband.* He had previously said, "Though a person, when he repudiates his wife, and she be married to another, will never again be reconciled to her; yet I am ready to forgive your perfidy and wantonness: only observe chastity hereafter, and I will deal kindly with you." Similar is this passage, "I am your husband," though I have repudiated you. He had, indeed, said, that he had given them a bill of divorce, and thus testified, as by a public document, that there was no longer any connection between him and that people, for exile was a

[1] Nor is there an instance of such a meaning. Literally it is, "For I have been married with (or to) thee." When this verb is followed by ב, as in chap. xxxi. 32, this is its meaning; but when followed by ל, as in 1 Chron. iv. 22, it means to rule, to exercise dominion. The *Vulgate* is, "For I am thy husband." The *Targum* gives the meaning, "For I have chosen you." The *Septuagint* went astray, "For I will rule over you." —*Ed.*

kind of divorce; but he says now, "I am your husband; for though I have been grievously offended with you, because you have broken your pledged faith, I yet remain in the same mind, so as to be ready to be your husband."

We now, then, perceive the real meaning of the Prophet: despair might have laid hold on the Israelites so as to dread that access to which the Prophet had invited them; but that no terror might hinder them to repent, God here declares that he would become their husband, and that he had not forgotten that relationship with which he had once favoured them. The sum of what he says is, "I have once embraced you with the love of a husband; ye have, indeed, become alienated from me, but return, and I am ready to forgive and to receive you, as though ye had always been faithful to me."

Again will I take you, he says; and then he adds, *one from a city, two from a family.* Deserving of especial notice is this passage; for God shews that they were not to wait for one another, and also, that though the whole body of the people rotted in their sins, yet a few would return to him, and that he would be reconciled to them. This was a point most necessary to be taught; for God's covenant was in common with the whole seed of Abraham; they might then have concluded that the covenant was extinct, except he gathered together the whole people; for he had not chosen one or two or a hundred or a thousand, but all the seed of Abraham. Since then the promise, without exception, was common to all, any one might thus reason, "What connection have I with God, except as one born of the race of Abraham? but I am not alone, for we are all the children of Abraham: yet I see that none turn to God, so I must perish with the rest of the people." Now, that this thought should not hinder the godly, he says, "I will take one from a city, two from a family;"[1] that is, "If one only come to me from

[1] The word is taken sometimes in a limited sense, and means what we understand by family: but it has here evidently a more extended meaning, and signifies a tribe, a community; for it includes more than a city. Such is its meaning in chap. viii. 3; and in Amos iii. 1, it comprehends the whole community of Israel. It is rendered "ἐκ πατριᾶς,—from a tribe," by the *Septuagint,* but improperly; "kindred," by the *Vulgate* and the *Tar-*

a city he shall find an open door; if two only from a tribe come to me, I shall receive them." We now apprehend the design of the Prophet.

Interpreters, indeed, explain one from a city as meaning, that though the multitude should perish, yet God would not deny forgiveness to three or four; but they teach not what is especially worthy of notice,—that two or three are mentioned, because this thought, as it has been said, might have perplexed them, that is, that they had been all in common chosen as a holy people.

What is here taught may be useful to us in the present day. For we see many foolishly excluding themselves from the hope of salvation, and seeking no access to God, because they have a regard to one another, and the great mass hold them entangled. How is it under the Papacy, that so many pertinaciously resist God? even because they think themselves safely hid in the multitude. We also find among us that some are an hinderance to others. Let this truth be ever remembered, that when God stretches forth his arms, he is ready to receive, not only all, were they with one consent to come to him, but also two or three, even from one city, or from a whole people.

He adds, *I will cause you to come to Zion.* This had been once said before: God intimates that their exile would be temporary, that the Israelites would again be made partakers of his inheritance, if they returned to God in sincerity and truth. It follows—

15. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

15. Et dabo vobis pastores secundum cor meum, et pascent vos scientiâ et intelligentiâ (*hoc est*, scienter et prudenter).

Here God promises that he would so provide for the salvation of his people after their return from exile, that they should not again perish. But the cause of God's vengeance ought to be observed, which is expressed in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, "My people," he says, "have been led captive, because they had no knowledge; therefore the grave has

gum. It no doubt means sometimes kindred, but not evidently in this place.—*Ed.*

widened its soul or its throat."[1] He then says, that the cause of the people's ruin was, because instruction had ceased among them, and pastors had become mute dogs or robbers. Here, on the other hand, God declares that he would give them faithful pastors, who would discharge in a befitting manner their office. I, indeed, allow, that under this term are included faithful and wise magistrates; but he especially refers to prophets and priests, whose office it is in particular to reform idolatry.[2]

We hence learn that the Church cannot continue without having faithful pastors to shew the way of salvation. The wellbeing of the Church then is secured, when God raises up true and faithful teachers to proclaim his truth: but when the Church is deprived of sound teachers, all things soon fall into ruin. For God, no doubt, intimates by this promise that he would not only be the deliverer of his people, so as to restore them from exile, but that he would be also their perpetual guardian after the people had returned to their own country. It hence follows, that the Church of God is not only begotten by means of holy and godly pastors, but that its life is also cherished, nourished, and confirmed by them to the end. As it is not enough for civil order to be once set up, except the magistrates continue in their office, so nothing is more ruinous to the Church than for God to take away faithful pastors. It cannot indeed be, that people will return to God, unless prophets be first sent: but God speaks here of a continued course of instruction, and of a well re-

[1] Rather, "itself;" for the word often rendered soul, has sometimes this meaning. See note on verse 11.—*Ed.*

[2] *Blayney*, following the *Targum*, renders pastors "rulers," and feed, "rule:" but this is to interpret and not to translate, as the words have never strictly these meanings, though what are sometimes to be understood by pastors are rulers, and by feeding, ruling or governing. But the interpretation in this instance seems not to be correct, and for the reason here assigned by *Calvin*. It is indeed the opinion of *Henry*, *Scott*, *Adam Clarke*, and others, that both civil and ecclesiastical pastors are intended; and if so, "knowledge" may be applied to the latter, and "wisdom" to the former. The *Septuagint* have omitted "wisdom," and retain only "knowledge." The *Targum* has "knowledge and wisdom;" the *Vulgate*, "knowledge and doctrine;" the *Syriac*, "knowledge and prudence;" and *Blayney*, "knowledge and discretion." The verb רעה means "to feed on," as in Isaiah xliv. 20, or, as here, to "feed with." It means also to "feed itself" as a beast does, Isaiah xi. 7.

gulated government in the Church, as though he had said, "I will not only give you prophets to lead you from your wanderings to me, and to restore you to the way of salvation, but I will also continually set over you sound and faithful teachers." But we must notice, that those who preside cannot rightly discharge their office unless they are endued with wisdom. God also intimates his paternal love, when he says, that good pastors would be dear to him. It afterwards follows—

16. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit *it*, neither shall *that* be done any more.

16. Et erit, cum multiplicati fueritis et fructificaveritis (*vel*, creveritis) in terra diebus illis, dicit Jehova, non dicent amplius, Arca fœderis Jehovæ, et non ascendet in cor, et non recordabuntur ejus, et non visitabunt, et non fiet amplius.

Interpreters have perverted this verse, for none of them have understood the design of the Prophet. The Jews, for the most part, have adduced frigid and far-fetched glosses,—that they would no more bring out to battles the Ark of the Covenant, as no enemy would invade their land. They think then that a peaceable state is promised to the people, as they would be constrained by no hostile force to carry the Ark of the Covenant here and there. But we clearly see that the words mean no such thing: it is then a comment wholly foreign to the subject. Others say, that what is said must be applied to the time of the Messiah, and none even of the Jews deny this; for it afterwards follows, that the Israelites would return with the tribe of Judah. This had not yet been fulfilled; it hence follows, that the Prophet here predicts of the kingdom of Christ. But the Jews, while allowing this, do not understand that anything is said of the abrogation of legal ceremonies; it has yet been thought by almost all Christians, that the Prophet here teaches us, that when Christ should come, an end would be put to all the shadows of the law, so that there would be no more any Ark of the Covenant, as the fulness of the Godhead would dwell in Christ.

This indeed is a view which seems plausible, but the meaning of the Prophet, as I think, is wholly different: for he

refers here to that divorce or division which had for a long time existed between the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. Though the kingdom of Israel, as to the number of its men, largeness of territory and wealth, was more flourishing and prosperous than the kingdom of Judah; yet there remained these advantages to the Jews,—that they had a Temple built according to God's command,—that its place had been chosen by God,—that they had the Ark of the Covenant as a symbol of God's presence. Hence there was contention between the kingdom of Judah and the ten tribes: the Israelites were elated on account of their number and their riches, and other temporal advantages; and the Jews gloried in their Temple and the Ark of the Covenant. And what now does the Prophet say? He declares that such would be the concord between the Israelites and the Jews, that the Jews would no more say, "The Ark of the Covenant," "The Temple of God;" for God would be present with them all. And the Prophet proceeds to confirm more fully what I have just said: it is therefore necessary to add the two following verses. He then says—

17. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it. to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

18. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

17. Tempore illo vocabunt Jerusalem solium Jehovæ, et congregabuntur ad eam omnes gentes ad nomen Jehovæ, Jerusalem dico; et non ambulabunt posthac (*vel*, amplius) post duriciem (*alii vertunt*, obstinationem; *est etiam interdum cogitatio*, שְׁרִרוּת, *post duriciem*) cordis sui malam.

18. In diebus illis venient domus Jehudah cum domo Israel, venient simul è terra aquilonis ad terram, quam dedi in hæreditatem patribus vestris (*vel*, quam dedi possidendam jure hæreditario patribus vestris.)

We now understand more clearly what I have already said,—that the Prophet promises here that there would be concord between the ten tribes and the kingdom of Judah, when both returned from exile; as though he had said, that their condition would be better than it ever had been; for the seed of Abraham had been torn as it were asunder; and the people whom God intended that they should continue in a holy union had become divided in the most shameful man-

ner. We indeed know that there had been inveterate hatred between the Jews and the Israelites. As then there had been such disgraceful division for a long time between the children of Abraham, the Prophet now shews what would be the fruit of exile; for after having been for a time chastised by the Lord, they would return to their own country, not to entertain the same emulation as had existed, but to unite together in calling on God, in order that the Jews might be as brethren to the Israelites, and the Israelites might cultivate mutual concord with the tribe of Judah.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou at this day mercifully sparest us, when yet in various ways we provoke thy displeasure,—O grant, that we may not harden ourselves against thy chastisements, but that thy forbearance may lead us to repentance, and that also thy scourges may do us good, and that we may so truly turn to thee, that our whole life may testify that we are in our hearts changed; and may we also stimulate one another, that we may unite together in rendering obedience to thy word, and each of us strive to glorify thy name, through Christ Jesus our Lord. —Amen.

Lecture Thirteenth.

We began yesterday to explain what the Prophet means, when he says, that there would be no more a remembrance of the Ark of the Covenant after the return of the Israelites into their country and their increase in it, even because there would be no discord among them as there had been before they were led into exile. For the ten tribes, we know, worshipped God after their own manner, as they had departed from the pure and simple teaching of the law. The Prophet then means, that they would all be the worshippers of the only true God, and that there would be among them such an unity of faith, that the Jew would not call God his God only, and that an Israelite would not desire for himself another God. Hence he adds, *It shall not ascend on the heart;* that is, such a thought shall no more come into their minds;

and *they shall not remember it;* that is, no monuments of their ancient disunion shall exist any more among them; and *they shall not visit it,* which means, they shall no more come stealthily into Jerusalem who may wish to offer sacrifices to God; and in short, he says, *No such thing shall be done.*[1]

Then he says, *At that time called shall be Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah.* The Prophet may appear inconsistent with himself by saying that *Jerusalem* would be *the throne* of God, and yet that the Jews would make no mention of the Ark of the Covenant: but the two clauses wholly agree, for he means that Jerusalem would be the seat and habitation of the eternal God, without any dispute being raised among them. The Israelites before their exile boasted that they retained the worship of the true God, and so magnificent was the display, and so great the pomp, that Jerusalem was quite obscure as to any external splendour. But the Prophet says that this distinction would no longer exist, and that the Israelites would no more contend with the Jews, for all would allow Jerusalem to be the sanctuary of God; as though he had said, "Pure religion shall flourish among them all without exception, such as had not done before." And this passage he more clearly confirms by the words which follow:—

[1] The literal rendering of this verse I conceive to be the following,—

16. And it shall be, that ye shall multiply
And be fruitful in the land.
In those days, saith Jehovah, they shall no more say,—
"The Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah;"
And it shall not come to *their* mind,
Nor shall they mention it, nor visit *it;*
And not made shall it be any more.

The two first lines seem connected with the former verse. There is a gradation in the three last lines,—It shall not be thought of, much less mentioned or named, as given by the *Septuagint,*—still less be visited,—and much less still, be made. This gradation is destroyed by *Blayney* by rendering the first line,

Nor shall it be the delight of their heart;

literally it is, "And it shall not ascend on the heart." The "heart" means often in Hebrew the mind; and "to come to mind" is the idea; it would not be thought of. The phrase occurs in this book in two other places, chap. vii. 31; xliv. 21; and, not to think, or, not to come to mind, is the most suitable meaning, as it is given in our version. The purpose of this kind of gradation is to render the thing more certain and indisputable, so that there might be no room for doubt.—*Ed.*

Assemble into it shall all nations to the name of Jehovah; or, on account of the name of Jehovah (ל, *lamed*, is here instead of a causal particle) shall all nations assemble at Jerusalem.[1] We see that there is nothing doubtful in these words, for the Prophet distinctly declares, that the worship of God, such as the Law required, would attain such esteem, that all nations would be ready to embrace whatever would be taught by the Jews. But by all nations we are to understand strictly the ten tribes, as they are called many nations in several places. If any one prefers to extend the meaning, let him enjoy his own opinion.

As I have said yesterday, the Jews think that the time of the Messiah is described here, because what Jeremiah promises has never been fulfilled; for there was no assembling of nations when the Jews returned from exile to their own country, as the Jews alone returned at that time. Hence they conclude that this passage can be explained in no other way than by referring it to the kingdom of Messiah; which, indeed, I confess to be true. But as that return and restoration of the people was a prelude of Christ's kingdom, the prophets ever begin at that time whenever they prophesy of the Church being renewed. It is indeed true, that the restoration of the whole world was to be looked for through the coming of Christ; yet God began to restore his Church, when he stretched forth his hand to the Jews, and when they built the city and the temple; which was necessary to be done before Christ came forth. But as to this passage, whether by nations we understand the ten tribes, or both kingdoms, or all nations indiscriminately, the meaning of the Prophet is equally clear, which is this,—that the Church would become larger than before, when God restored the people, and that God would then cause true religion to flourish, unaccompanied with envy and strife.

[1] This seems to be the best rendering. *Blayney* leaves out the word "Jerusalem;" but for no sufficient reason. The whole verse is as follows:—

In that day call shall they Jerusalem,
"The throne of Jehovah;"
And gathered into it shall be all the nations,
For the name of Jehovah, *even* to Jerusalem;
And they shall no more walk
After the resolutions of their wicked heart.—*Ed.*

What follows confirms the opinion, that the passage is to be explained of the two kingdoms, *Walk*, he says, *shall they no more after the evil hardness of their own heart.*[1] It was not usual to speak thus of heathen nations, who had ever been strangers to the teaching of the Law. As this, then, can only be specifically applied to the Jews and Israelites, that explanation is the most to be approved, which makes all nations to mean the ten tribes, or the whole people.

Then is added, what is of the same meaning, *In those days shall come the house of Judah with the house of Israel.* It hence appears, that the Prophet speaks of the posterity of Abraham and not of other nations; for he adds this verse as explanatory. It might, indeed, have been asked, "What does this mean, All nations shall come?" To this he answers, "The house of Israel shall unite with the house of Judah;" that is, there shall be no more hatred between these two

[1] "Evil" is connected with "hardness;" but it belongs properly to "their heart." The word rendered "hardness" is שְׁרִרוּת, a plural noun, found eight times in Jeremiah; here, and in chapters vii. 24; ix. 14; xi. 8; xiii. 10; xvi. 12; xviii. 12; xxiii. 17; and twice elsewhere, Deut. xxix. 19; Ps. lxxxi. 12. It is so variously rendered by the *Septuagint*, that they evidently did not understand its specific meaning; ἐνθυμήματα, thoughts, devices; τὰ ἀρεστα, things pleasing or agreeable; πλάνη, wandering. These words are used for it in Jeremiah. The *Vulgate* ever renders it "pravitas—pravity—wickedness." The *Targum* uniformly renders it "cogitatio—thought or imagination." The latter word is used in our version, (except in Ps. lxxxi. 12, "lust,") with a marginal reading "stubbornness." The *Syriac* and *Arabic* vary as much as the *Septuagint*, "appetites, lusts, will," &c. To "walk after" precedes it in most instances except in chap. xviii. 12, where it is preceded by "doing." Now to "do the hardness of the heart," is no suitable expression; nor is "imagination" or "stubbornness" anything better. It can be derived from no verb which means to think or to imagine, or which has any connection with depravity or wickedness, or with appetites or lusts. Nor can we derive it from שָׁרַר, which those do who render it "stubbornness;" for that will suit the passage referred to in chap. xviii. 12. It must then come from שָׂר, to direct, to regulate, to rule, to exercise authority. It occurs three times in a reduplicate form; as a participial noun in Esth. i. 22, and as a verb and a participle in Hithpael in Numb. xvi. 13, where it is applied in the sense of making oneself a prince or a tyrant. The literal meaning of the noun then is, in the plural number, predominances, domineerings, arbitraments; and it may be rendered determinations, resolutions, predominant influences or inclinations. "Walk shall they no more after the resolutions of their wicked heart." It is used in chap. vii. 24, in apposition with "counsels," being evidently a stronger word: it seems to mean resoluteness or resolvedness, a full determination, a wilful decision. *Parkhurst* renders it, "the ruling principles."—*Ed.*

nations, for they shall acknowledge one another as brethren, and know that they have arisen from the same source, and that they ought to be one people. In short, the Prophet explains in this verse what he had said before. And we ought especially to notice what he adds, *Come shall they together from the land of the north into the land which I have given to be possessed by their fathers.* The Jews had not yet gone into exile; the Prophet said this to them while they were quiet, as it were, in their own nest at Jerusalem, and in the country around; nor could he convince them of what they afterwards found to be true to their great loss,—that an exile was nigh them, like that which they then saw had happened to their brethren, the Israelites. But yet the Prophet spoke of them, as though they had been exiled and dwelt like the Israelites in the north country; *Come together*, he says, *shall they from the land of the north.*[1]

They might have objected and said, "We are as yet enjoying our own inheritance, and no one can drive us hence, for it cannot be that God shall be deprived of his own temple, as he has chosen for himself a perpetual habitation among us." Such words were no doubt clamorously spoken by them. But the Prophet here repels their vain confidence, and says, that their only hope of deliverance was in looking forward to the restoration which the Lord would grant them after they had been for a time banished from their country. Now the Prophet here sets forth to them the benefit which would arise from exile, in order that they might bear with more submission the punishment they were to endure: for they might have a hundred times despaired, had they no hope that this exile would be only for a time, and that they would again be gathered together with their brethren the Israelites. It now follows—

[1] *Calvin* uses the verb "venient," shall come, twice: but the first verb is to walk, and expresses the associating of Judah with Israel, or their union. The words are,—

In those days walk will the house of Judah with the house of Israel,
And come shall they together from the land of the north,
To the land which I made their fathers to inherit.

They would be first united, and then advance together to their own land. —*Ed.*

19. But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.

19. Et ego dixi, Quomodo ponam te in filios, et dabo tibi terram desiderii (*hoc est*, desiderabilem,) hæreditatem cupiditatis[1] (*hoc est*, quæ concupiscitur,) exercitus gentium? Et dixi, Pater mi, clamabis ad me, et à me non recedes (de post me, *ad verbum*, מאחרי.)

It is not my purpose to mention all the expositions of this verse; but it is enough to shew what seems to be the meaning of the Prophet. Whenever I touch on opinions which I disapprove, this I feel constrained to do, because when they present the appearance of truth, readers may be deceived by them: but when the truth itself is sufficiently conspicuous, I am not disposed to spend labour in refuting the opinions of others.

What, then, the words of the Prophet mean is this,—God here asks, How was it possible that the race of Abraham could again be propagated since it was nearly dead? The answer is, It shall be, when thou wilt *call me Father*, and *turn not away from me*. The question was asked, that the Jews might feel as though their condition was past remedy. And doubtless, since they had so greatly and so obstinately provoked God by their wickedness, they might have seemed to have become wholly lost. God then assumes here the character of one filled with astonishment, as though he had said, "Ye are, indeed, in a state of despair, there is no hope of your salvation; but yet, as it is my purpose again to restore you, I wish now to find out a way, by which your race may again be propagated." How, then, is this to be done? He shews that the only thing required was, to call him Father, not with the mouth, but really with the heart.

[1] *Calvin* takes the word in its Chaldee meaning; צבי means in Hebrew, elation, splendour, glory; but in Chaldee, desire, what is desired; and this suits the passage best, "The inheritance of desire to hosts of nations;" that is, The inheritance desired by hosts of nations. This is the meaning preferred by *Gataker*. I would render the whole verse thus,—

19. But I, said have I, "How shall I put thee among the children,
And give thee the land of delight,
The inheritance desired by hosts of nations?"
Said have I also, "My Father shalt thou call me,
And from me thou wilt not turn away."

When the pronouns are given before verbs in Hebrew, as אנכי, I, here, they are ever emphatical. "But I," or, "as for me," or, "even I have said."—*Ed.*

We now, then, perceive the meaning of the Prophet: for he humbles the Israelites by thus ascribing astonishment to God, as though it was a thing very difficult to be done; but at the same time he gives them hope, because salvation was prepared for them, provided they called on God with a sincere heart, and acknowledged him as their Father, and that perseveringly, without ever turning aside from him. In short, God intimates that the Israelites were like dead men, and that their salvation was hopeless, without a resurrection. He yet promises them salvation on this condition,—that they called on him and did this, not with a double heart, nor by a sudden impulse, such as soon vanishes away; for he says, *Thou shalt not turn aside from me;* that is, "Be always obedient to me, and I will prove that I shall not be called in vain a Father by you." It follows—

20. Surely *as* a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

20. Certè (*subaudienda est particula* sicut) perfidè agit mulier à socio suo[1] (*hoc est*, perfidè agit cum marito, *ubi ab ipso discedit, vel, se alienat,*) sic perfidè egistis in me, domus Israel, inquit Jehovah.

He confirms the first clause of the preceding verse: for he had said that it could hardly be that the Jews would recover what they had lost, and be formed again a new people; and he shews the reason,—because they were like an adulteress, as he had before stated. But he did not yet wish to take away every hope; only he insists on this, that they were seriously to consider their sins, in order that they might become displeased with themselves, and flee to God's mercy for refuge. Nor did he do this so much for their sake, as for the sake of the people among whom he dwelt. For he had respect, as it has been often stated, especially to the Jews, who had become so hardened in their vices as not to think that this example, by which God intended to terrify them, so as to bend their hard hearts to repentance, belonged

[1] *Blayney*, contrary to all the early versions, construes the word מֵרֵעָה with woman, "a wicked woman." "Friend," or associate, or partner, is here evidently put for husband; a thing commonly done in other languages. Our common version of this verse is by no means correct: the preposition מִן is not always "from," but sometimes "with." So here,—

Surely, *as* a woman deals perfidiously with her partner,
So perfidiously against me have ye dealt,
O house of Israel, saith Jehovah.—*Ed.*

to them. Hence it was for this reason that God so severely reproved Israel; for he had said before, that the Jews were still worse. He afterwards subjoins—

21. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the Lord their God.

21. Vox super excelsa audita est, fletus precationum filiorum Israel; quia perverterunt viam suam, obliti sunt Jehovæ Dei sui.

What I have stated becomes now more evident,—that the case of the Israelites is here set before the Jews, that the perverse, whom God had spared, might know that the same punishment impended over them, except they returned in due time to him: for the Prophet declares, that the Israelites were weeping and in tears, because they had departed from their God, and violated their faith pledged to him. For what purpose did he do this? That the Jews, who indulged themselves in their own pleasures, might be awakened, and be convinced, that except they anticipated God's judgments, the same tears and the same weeping were prepared for them. The Israelites, indeed, did not as yet thus weep and shew signs of true repentance; for the Prophet does not here commend their feeling or their piety, but intimates, that they were thus severely afflicted, because they had forsaken their God.

A voice, he says, *was heard on high places;* that is, It was everywhere sufficiently known how cruelly the Israelites were oppressed by their enemies. Now they cried, then they called themselves the most wretched of men: why was this lamentation? *Because they had perverted their ways.* It is, then, the same as though he had said,—that it was a monstrous perverseness in the Jews, that being warned by the punishment of their brethren, they did not repent: for the calamity which happened to the Israelites filled all men with terror. That kingdom had, indeed, flourished for a long time; but the land had been emptied of its inhabitants, and was occupied by wild beasts, until some were sent from Persia and other parts in the East to cultivate it. How could a land so pleasant and so fruitful have become like a desert? Even because God had so predicted: "Ye have neglected," he says, "my Sabbaths, and your land

shall rest, and it shall no more be wearied by you." (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35.) It was an awful sight; and nations, far and wide, were able to see how great must have been the impiety of that people, on whom God had taken such dreadful vengeance. Were not the Jews, who had this solitude before their eyes, and this devastation of the land, extremely stupid in overlooking all this?

We now see the design of the Prophet, when he says, *A voice on high places was heard,* as though the Israelites cried on the tops of mountains. And he adds, *the weeping of the supplications,* &c.: but he does not mean, that they were prayers which arose from faith; but simply that they were such lamentations as betokened misery and wretchedness. In giving a reason, the Prophet mentions not what the Israelites confessed, but only shews the cause why they so deeply deplored their calamities; it was, because they had *perverted their ways, and forgotten Jehovah their God.*[1] He afterwards adds—

22. Return, ye backsliding children, *and* I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou *art* the Lord our God.

23. Truly in vain *is salvation hoped for* from the hills, *and from* the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God *is* the salvation of Israel.

22. Revertimini, filii rebelles; sanabo transgressiones vestras. Ecce, nos venimus ad te, quia Jehova Deus noster.

23. Certè fallacia a collibus, multitudo montium; certè in Jehova Deo nostro salus Israel.

God here exhorts the Israelites to repent, that by their example he might move the Jews. The benefit of what is here taught might indeed have reached to the miserable captives and exiles; but as Jeremiah was especially the teacher of his own nation, he laboured chiefly no doubt for their advantage, as we have before stated. God then here declares, that he would be reconcilable to the Israelites, how

[1] The verse may be thus rendered,—

21. A voice on the high places!
Heard is the weeping, the supplications
Of the people of Israel;
Because they had perverted their way,
Had forgotten Jehovah their God.

Instead of "high places," *Blayney* has "plains;" but there is no satisfactory reason for the change. As the verb in Hebrew commonly precedes its nominative, the construction adopted above is the most suitable to the character of the language.—*Ed.*

grievously soever they had sinned. He afterwards introduces them as answering, *Behold*, we return, or we shall *come to thee:* for the Prophet speaks here of the future conversion of the ten tribes.

It is then a dialogue between God and the Israelites. God himself freely invites them to repent: *Return*, he says, *ye rebellious children;* and then he promises to be a physician to heal their diseases: *I will heal thy transgressions;* that is, I will blot out thy sins, and absolve thee from guilt. God then undertakes to do these things; first, to stimulate the Israelites to repentance, and then to give them the hope of pardon: and he says that a remedy was provided for them, except they hardened themselves. Now, the Israelites, on the other hand, make this answer, *Behold, we shall come to thee.* Here Jeremiah condemns the obstinacy of his own nation, by saying, that the Israelites, when thus kindly invited by God, would not be perverse, but would, on the contrary, be tractable and obedient. This indeed was not fulfilled, when a liberty to return was given to the people, except in the case of a few, who had a right feeling, and preferred the glory of God to their temporal advantages. But the number was small; nor was it a matter of surprise; for God had not previously said, without reason, that if one came from a city, and two from a tribe, he would be received, though others continued fixed in their perverseness. However this may have been, God here intimates that the Israelites would not be so refractory as not to obey his admonition when the hope of pardon and salvation would be presented to them: and this is mentioned, that the perverseness of the Jews might appear more detestable.

But some think that the Israelites are here upbraided, because they hypocritically pretended that they always sought God. Hence they elicit this meaning, "Ye indeed say, *Behold, we return to thee, thou art our God;*" as though he condemned their hypocrisy, because they falsely alleged that they always sought him. But this view seems to me foreign to the intention of the Prophet. Hence I doubt not but that Jeremiah sets before the Jews, as in a picture, what ought to have constrained them not to persist so obstinately

in their sinful courses: "Behold," he says, "God is prepared to receive into favour your brethren, who are undone and past all hope; and when they shall hear God's voice kindly and graciously inviting them to himself, they will doubtless return: why then do not ye obey?"

And in the same sense is to be taken what follows, *Surely, deceit is from the hills, and the multitude of mountains*, or, from the multitude of mountains, as the letter מ is to be repeated. Here the Prophet more fully expresses the evidence of their repentance, as though he had said, "We have been deceived by the hills and the multitude of mountains; we thought that there would be more defence from a large number of gods than if we worshipped one God: this deception has led to ruin. Let then all these deceits be now discarded; for we shall be content with the only true God." In short, the Israelites confess, in these words, that they had been drawn into ruin by the worst of errors, while they sought many gods, and did not acquiesce in the one true God.

Then they add, *for surely in Jehovah our God is salvation.* They set here the one true God in opposition to all their idols, as though they had said, that the cause of all their evils was, that they did not continue in the service of the one true God, but wandered after a multitude of Gods. We hence see that these two things cannot possibly be connected,—to worship the true God,—and to seek for ourselves various other gods, and to form vain hopes, as they do, who are not satisfied with the only true God.[1] It follows—

[1] The literal rendering of these two verses is the following:—

22. Return, ye apostate children,
I will heal your apostasies.—
Behold us! We come to thee;
For thou art Jehovah our God:
23. Surely, in vain *are* the hills,
The multitude of mountains:
Surely, in (or through) Jehovah our God
Is the salvation of Israel.

The word rendered "apostate," does not mean "rebellious," but such as turn away, *i.e.*, from God; and the word for "apostasies" means the same, being from the same root. The מ before the word for "hills," is not a preposition, as it is commonly taken, but a formative: so it appears from all the versions. *Blayney* conjectures that it belongs to the former word, and makes it לשקרים; but then he does not account for the ל prefixed to

24. For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.

24. Et pudor (*vel*, probrum) voravit laborem patrum nostrorum à pueritia nostra, oves eorum et pecora eorum, filios eorum et filias eorum.

They confirm more fully the same complaint,—That God had by manifest proofs shewed the sins of the nation; for he had consumed their labour, that is, whatever they had acquired by labour. He also adds *sheep and cattle*, and then *sons and daughters*. He does not indeed ascribe this consumption to God; but the mode of speaking is more emphatic, when he says, *Shame has consumed the labour of our fathers from our childhood:* for by *shame* he understands wickedness, of which they ought to have been ashamed. The meaning then is, that all the evils they had endured could in no other way be accounted for, inasmuch as the whole was to be ascribed to their wickedness. Our *shame*, then,[1] that is, our wickedness, *has consumed the labour of our fathers*. It follows—

25. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

25. Jacuimus in pudore nostro, et operuit nos ignominia nostra; quoniam cum Jehova Deo nostro sceleratè egimus, nos et patres nostri, à pueritia nostra, et ad hunc diem usque; et non audivimus vocem Jehovæ Dei nostri.

As the Israelites say here nothing new, but continue the same subject, I propose only to touch briefly on the words, lest I should be too tedious. They say then that they were *lying* in their miseries; and why? *because they had dealt wickedly with God*. We see that they are explaining what they had confessed,—even that the labour of their fathers had been consumed by their shame, that is, by their wickedness; and they ascribe to themselves what might have been put to the account of their fathers, because they knew that they were heirs to their iniquity. *We have lain*, they say, *in our shame*.[2] They here shortly confess that they were

it. There is no different reading. The *Septuagint* is, εἰς ψεῦδος ἦσαν οἱ βουνοὶ—for a lie were the hills. The *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*, are materially the same.—*Ed.*

[1] Rather, "And the shame," *i.e.*, the idol-worship, referred to in the preceding verse; the article ה is prefixed to the noun. This is the view taken by *Gataker* and *Blayney*. See chap. xi. 13; Hos. ix. 10.—*Ed.*

[2] *Calvin* seems to have followed the *Septuagint* in rendering the verb in the past tense. The *Vulgate* and *Syriac* retain the future of the ori-

deservedly miserable, that they could not accuse God of cruelty, as that he afflicted them too severely. How so? because they were lying in their own *shame*, and *their own disgrace covered* them; as though they said, that the cause of all their evils was to be found in their sins, and that it was not to be sought anywhere else.

Because we and our fathers, they say, *have done wickedly*. By these words they intimate that they had acted thus, not for a day only, but had been so perverse, that from early life they had imbibed the iniquity of their fathers, and thus added evils to evils. They had said before, that the labour of their fathers had been consumed from their childhood, thereby signifying the continuance of their punishment; for God had not for a day chastised them, but had often repeated his scourges, and yet without any benefit. Now they add, "As *we have from our childhood dealt wickedly towards our God*, so also he has warned us from our childhood to return to him; and it has been our fault that we have not returned, for he called us; but as we were obstinate, so also God has justly executed on us his vengeance."

They afterwards say, *even to this day;* by which they confirm what I have already stated,—that they had been so perverse as not to cease from their vices. At the same time he points out the source of all their wickedness: *they hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah*. Had they gone astray, and had God been silent, their fault might have been extenuated; but as God had daily sent prophets to them, who

ginal; but the *Targum* gives the present, and rightly so, as the future in Hebrew is often to be so taken. It is the same in *Welsh*, the future conveys the meaning of the present. This distich might in that language be rendered exactly according to the Hebrew, and the future would be understood as expressing what the present state of things is,—

Gorweddwn yn ein cywilydd,
A gorchuddia ni ein gwarth.

But in English the present must be used, as it is the confession of the penitent when returning to God,—

We lie in our shame,
And cover us does our disgrace,
Because against Jehovah our God
Have we sinned, we and our fathers,
From our childhood even to this day;
And we have not hearkened
To the voice of Jehovah our God.—*Ed.*

never ceased to cry in their hearing, and yet they continued deaf, their perverseness in their sinful courses was inexcusable. We then see that their sin was increased by the circumstance, that they refused to hear the voice of God; as though he had said, that God had done his part in calling them back from the way of ruin, but that they had been so obstinate as to disregard his favour, and that they thus justly suffered, not only for their impiety, but also for their ingratitude and perverse wickedness.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not, though favoured with many blessings, to provoke thee by our misdeeds, as though we avowedly carried on war against thee,—O grant, that we being at length warned by those examples, by which thou invitest us to repentance, may restrain our depraved nature, and in due time repent, and so devote ourselves to thy service, that thy name through us may be glorified, and that we may strive to bring into the way of salvation those who seem to be now lost, so that thy mercy may extend far and wide, and that thus thy salvation, obtained through Christ thine only-begotten Son, may be known and embraced by all nations.—Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

Lecture Fourteenth.

1. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.

1. Si reverteris Israel, dicit Jehova, ad me revertere (*vel*, apud me quiesce;) et si abstuleris abominationes tuas à facie mea, et non fueris vagus (*alii*, et non migrabis.)

The Prophet no doubt requires here from the people a sincere return to God, inasmuch as they had often pretended to confess their sins, and had given many signs of repentance, while they were acting deceitfully with him. As then they had often dealt falsely with God and with his prophets, Jeremiah bids them to return to God without any disguise and in good faith. With regard to what is here substantially taught, this is the Prophet's meaning; but there is some ambiguity in the words.

Some read thus, "If thou returnest, Israel, to me, saith Jehovah," connecting "to me, אלי," with the first clause, then they read separately "תשוב, *teshub*, thou shalt rest;" and so they think that what follows is the repetition of the same thing, "If thou wilt take away thine abominations from before me, thou shalt not migrate;" that is, I will not cast thee out as I have threatened. Others take the verb תשוב, *teshub*, in the same sense, (for it is the same verb repeated,) "If thou wilt return, Israel, return to me." The Prophet doubtless bids the Israelites to return to God in sincerity, and without any disguise, and not to act falsely with him, as they had often done.

I have as yet mentioned only what others have thought; but, in my judgment, the most suitable rendering is, "If thou wilt return, Israel, rest in me," *arrete toi*, as we say in French. *Rest* then *in me;* and then a definition is given, *If thou wilt take away thine abominations* (for the copulative is to be taken as expletive or explanatory) *from my sight, and wilt not wander.* What some of those I have referred to have given as their rendering, "If thou wilt return to me, Israel, thou shalt rest," I wholly reject, as it seems forced: but I allow this reading, "If thou wilt return, Israel, thou shalt rest in me;" or this, "If thou wilt return, Israel, return to me;" for the difference is not great. The Prophet here evidently condemns the hypocrisy which the Israelites had practised; for they had often professed themselves as ready to render obedience to God, and afterwards proved that they had made a false profession. Since then deceit and emptiness had been so often found in them, the Prophet demands here, in the name and by the command of God, that they should in truth and sincerity return to him.

If this reading be approved, "Israel, return to me," the intimation is, that they ever took circuitous courses, that they might not return directly to God: for it is usual with hypocrites to make a great show of repentance and at the same time to shun God. If then we follow this reading, the Prophet means this, "Israel, there is no reason for thee hereafter to think that thou gainest anything by boasting with thy mouth of thy repentance; *return to me;* know that

thou hast to do with God, who is not deceived, as he never deceives any: return then faithfully to me, and let thy conversion be sincere and in no way deceptive."

But if the verb, תָּשׁוּב, *teshub*, be taken in the other sense, there would be no great difference in the meaning; "If thou wilt return, Israel, thou shalt rest in me;" that is, thou shalt hereafter have nothing to do with idols and with thy perverted ways. Thus the Prophet briefly shews that the return of Israel would be nothing, except they acquiesced in God alone, and wandered not after vain objects, as they had often done. And with this view corresponds what follows, "Even if thou takest away (for the copulative, as I have said, is to be taken as explanatory) thine abominations from my sight, and wilt wander no more, וְלֹא תָנוּד, *vela tanud.*" For the vice which Jeremiah meant especially to condemn was this,—that Israel, while pretending a great show of religion, yet vacillated and did not devote themselves with all their heart to God, but were changeable in their purpose. This vice then is what Jeremiah justly condemns; and hence I am disposed to embrace this view, "Israel, if thou wilt return, rest in me;" that is, continue constantly faithful to me: but how can this be done? "Even if thou wilt take away thy abominations, and if thou wilt not wander;" for thy levity and inconstancy hitherto has been well known.[1]

Whatever view we may take, this passage deserves to be noticed as being against hypocrites, who dare not openly to reject prophetic warnings; but while they shew some tokens of repentance, they still by windings shew the presence of God. They indeed testify by their mouth that they seek God, but yet have recourse to subterfuges: and hence I have

[1] The best rendering is that which connects "to me" with the former clause: the end of the verse, as *Grotius* observes, proves this. If they returned to God, they were to return from captivity; and if they cast away their abominations, they were not to be vagabonds or to wander any more. This seems to be the meaning. The ו before לֹא in the last clause is left out in ten MSS., and in the *Vulgate*, *Targum*, and *Syriac*. The verse then would be as follows,—

1. If thou wilt return, Israel, saith Jehovah, to me,
   Thou shalt be restored, (that is, from captivity:)
   If thou wilt remove thy abominations from my sight,
   Thou shalt not be a wanderer.—*Ed.*

said that this passage is remarkably useful, so that we may know that God cannot be pacified by those fallacious trifles which hypocrites bring forward, but that he requires a sincere heart, and that he abominates all dissimulation. It is therefore expressly said, *If thou wilt take away thy abominations from my sight.* For hypocrites ever regard display and seek to be approved by men, and are satisfied with their approbation; but God calls their attention to himself. It must at the same time be observed, that he cannot be deceived; for he is the searcher of hearts. It follows—

2. And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

2. Et jurabis, vivit Jehova, in veritate, in judicio et in justitia; et benedicent se in eo gentes et in eo gloriabuntur.

Here the Prophet goes on with the same subject; for he denudes those flatteries, by which they thought that God could be pacified: for when they had his name in their mouth, they thought it sufficient for their defence,—"What! do we not call upon God? do we not ascribe to him his due honour, when we swear by his name?" There is in the Prophet's words a part given for the whole; for swearing is to be taken for the whole of God's worship. When therefore the Israelites made a profession of God's name, they thought themselves absolved from all guilt.

Hence the Prophet says, *Thou shalt swear truly* in the name of God; that is, "Ye are indeed self-confident, because an external profession of religion seems to you to be a sort of expiation, whenever ye seek to contend with God: ye boast that you are Abraham's seed, and swear by the name of God; but ye are sacrilegious, when ye thus falsely profess God's name." *Swear* then, he says, *in truth.*

We hence see how the words of the Prophet harmonize together: he had said, that Israel had hitherto dealt falsely with God, because they had not performed what in words they had promised, for they went astray; and now he adds, that it availed the Israelites nothing, that they openly called on God and shewed themselves to be his people by an external worship: this, he says, is nothing, except ye worship God *in truth and in judgment and in righteousness.*

Truth is no doubt to be taken here for integrity, as we shall see in the fifth chapter: it is the same as though he had said, that God is not rightly worshipped, except when the heart is free from all guile and deceit; in short, he means that there is no worship of God without sincerity of heart. But the truth, of which the Prophet speaks, is especially known by *judgment and righteousness;* that is, when men deal faithfully with one another, and render to all their right, and seek not their own gain at the expense of others. When therefore equity and uprightness are thus observed by men, then is fulfilled what is required here by the Prophet: for then they worship not God fallaciously, nor with vain words, but really shew that they do, without disguise, fear and reverence God.

What follows is variously explained by interpreters; but the Prophet, I have no doubt, does here indirectly reprove the Israelites, because God's name had been exposed to many reproaches and mockeries, when the heathens said, that there was no power in God to help the Israelites, and when the people themselves expostulated with God, as though they had a just cause for contending with him,—"What! God has promised that we should be models of his blessing; but we are exposed to the reproaches of the heathens: how can this be?" Since then the Israelites thus deplored their lot, and cast the blame on God, the Prophet gives this answer, *Bless themselves shall the nations and glory in him.* Some refer this to the Israelites, but not correctly. It had indeed been said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed," or, shall bless themselves. But this blessing had its beginning, as it is here noticed by the Prophet. For we must look for the cause or the fountain of this blessing: how could the nations bless themselves through the seed or the children of Abraham, except God, the author of the blessing, manifested his favour towards the children of Abraham? Very aptly then does the Prophet say here, *Then bless themselves in God shall all the nations, and in him shall they glory;* that is, "Ye are to be blamed, that God's curse is upon you and renders you objects of reproach to all people, and also, that heathens disdain and despise the name of

God: for your impiety has constrained God to deal more severely with you than he wished; for he is ever ready to shew his paternal clemency. What then is the hinderance, that the nations bless not themselves in God and glory in him? that is, that pure religion does not flourish through the whole world, and that all nations do not come to you and unite in the worship of the only true God? The hinderance is your impiety and wickedness; this is the reason why God is not glorified, and why your felicity is not everywhere celebrated among the nations." We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet,—that the Jews groundlessly imputed blame to God, because they were oppressed by so many evils; for they had procured for themselves all their calamities, and at the same time gave occasion to heathens to profane God's name by their reproaches.[1] It follows—

3. For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

3. Quoniam sic dicit Jehova viro Jehudah (*hoc est*, Judæis) et Jerosolymæ, Novate vobis novale, et ne seminetis super spinas.

The Prophet still pursues the same subject; for he reproves the hypocrisy of the Israelites, because they sought to discharge their duty towards God only by external ceremonies, while their hearts were full of deceits and of every kind of impiety and wickedness. Hence he says, that God required this from the Jews,—to *plough again the fallow, and not to sow among thorns.*

It is a most suitable comparison; for Scripture often compares us to a field, when it represents us as God's heritage; and we have been chosen by God as a peculiar people for this end—that he may gather fruit from us,

[1] This is a very lucid and satisfactory exposition. The import of the passage is very clearly given. A simpler version may be made, and such as will exhibit the meaning more plainly. When two *vaus* occur, they may often be rendered, *when*, and *then*: so here,—

2. When thou shalt swear, "Live does Jehovah,"
In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness;
Then call him blessed shall nations,
And in him shall they glory.

To swear is to avow Jehovah as our God. The verbs "bless" and "glory" are both in Hithpael, which has commonly a reciprocal sense, but not always. See Ps. lxxii. 17; cv. 3. This and the preceding verse belong to the last chapter.—*Ed.*

as a husbandman gathers produce from his fields. We can indeed add nothing to what God is; but there is a fruit which he demands; so that our whole life is to be devoted to his glory. God then would not have us to be idle and fruitless, but to bring forth some fruit. But what is done by hypocrites? They sow; that is, they shew some concern, yea, they pretend great ardour, when God exhorts them to repent, or when he invites them. They then make a great bustle; yet they mar everything by their own mixtures, the same as though one scattered his seed among thorns: but it will be of no avail thus to cast seed among thorns; for the ground ought to be well cleared and prepared. Hence God laughs to scorn this preposterous care and diligence, in which hypocrites pride themselves, and says, that they busy themselves without any advantage; for it is the same, as though an husbandman had wholly lost his seed; for when the ground is full of briers and thorns, the seed, though it may grow for a time, cannot yet bring forth fruit. For this reason God bids the Israelites to *plough the fallows;*[1] as though he had said, that they were like a rough ground, which is full of thorns, and that therefore there was need of unusual and by no means a common cultivation; for when thorns and briers grow in a field, of what benefit will it be to cast seed there? Nay, a field cannot be well prepared by the plough alone, so that it may produce fruit; but much labour is also necessary, as is the case with fallow ground, which is called *essarter* in our language.

The Prophet then intimates that the people had become hardened in their vices, and that they were not only full of vices, like a field left uncultivated for two years; but that their vices were so deep, that they could not be well cleared away by ploughing alone, except they were drawn up by the roots, as they were like thorns and brambles, which have been growing in a field for many years. We hence see, that not only impiety and contempt of God, and other sins of the people of Israel, are referred to by the Prophet, but also their perverseness; for they had so hardened themselves for

[1] Literally, "Plough for yourselves the ploughing," or, the plough-land; or, "Fallow for yourselves the fallow." They were not to sow a land once ploughed; but they were to plough again.—*Ed.*

many years in their vices, that there was need not only of the plough, but also of other instruments to tear up the thorns, to eradicate those vices which had formed deep roots. As then, he had before warned them, that they would labour in vain except they returned to God with sincerity of heart and acquiesced in him; so here he bids them to examine their life, that they might not cast away their seed, like hypocrites, who formally acknowledge their sins. Hence he bids them wholly to shake off their vices, which were hid within, according to what they do, who tear up thorns and briers in a field, which has been long neglected, and left without being cultivated. It now follows—

4. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.

4. Circumcidimini Jehovæ, et auferte præputia cordis vestri, viri Jehudah et incolæ Jerusalem; ne egrediatur tanquam ignis furor meus, et accendatur, et nemo extinguat, propter (à facie, *ad verbum*) malitiam actionum vestrarum.

The Prophet expresses here more clearly what he had before said metaphorically or by a figure; for he had bidden them to eradicate their vices, according to what is usually done by breaking up the fallow ground; but now dropping that figure, he clearly shews what was to be done, and yet the clause contains what is figurative. He calls their attention to circumcision, which was a symbol of renovation, as though he had said,—That they sufficiently understood what they were to do, except they were wholly unteachable; "For why," he says, "has circumcision been enjoined? Does not God by this symbol shew, that if a man rightly aspires after true religion, he ought to begin by putting off all the evil propensities of his flesh? Is he not to deny himself, and to die as it were both to himself and to the world? for circumcision includes all this." Then the Prophet shews that the Israelites had no excuse, that they went not astray through mistake or through ignorance; but they were acting perversely and deceitfully with God; for circumcision, by which they had been initiated into God's service, sufficiently taught them, that God is not rightly nor faithfully served, except when men deny themselves.

We now then see what the Prophet meant by these words, when he bids them to be circumcised to God, and to take away the foreskin of their heart: *Be ye circumcised,* he says, *to Jehovah.* Circumcision was their great boast; but only before men; for nothing but ambition and vanity ruled in them, while they openly exulted and boasted that they were God's holy and peculiar people. Hence the Prophet bids them not to value what was of no importance, but to become circumcised to Jehovah; that is, he bids them not to seek applause before the world, but seriously to consider that they had to do with God. And hence he adds, *Take away the foreskin of your heart,* as though he had said, "When God commanded the seed of Abraham to be circumcised, (Gen. xvii. 10-12,) it was not his object to have a small portion of skin cut off, but he had regard to something higher, even that ye should be circumcised in heart."

The Prophet, in short, teaches us here what Paul has more clearly explained, (Rom. ii. 29,) even this,—that the letter is of no value before God, but that the spirit is what he requires: for Paul in these words means, that the external sign is worthless, except accompanied by the reality within; for the literal circumcision mentioned by Paul is merely the external rite; in the same manner baptism with us may be called the letter, when there is no repentance and faith. But the spirit, or spiritual circumcision, is the denial of self; it is renovation, and in a word, that true conversion to God, of which the Prophet speaks here. Nor has Moses been silent on this point; for in the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy he shews that the Jews greatly deceived themselves, if they thought that they did all that God required, when they were circumcised in the flesh; "Circumcise," he says, "your hearts to the Lord." He indeed reminds us in another place, that this is altogether the work of God; but though God circumcises the heart, yet this exhortation, that men are to circumcise themselves, is not superfluous: and the same is the case with baptism; for when Paul exhorts the faithful to fear God and to lead a holy life, he refers to baptism. It is yet certain that men do not bestow on themselves what God signifies by the sign of baptism; but he

counsels them to seek from God the grace of his Spirit, that they might not in vain be sealed by the external rite of baptism, while destitute of its reality. When therefore the Prophet bids the Israelites to *take away the foreskin of their heart*, it is the same as though he had said, that they were indeed liberal enough with regard to ceremonies and outward worship, but that these were empty masks unless preceded by a right disposition within.

And he addresses the Jews, and also the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for they thought that they far excelled the Israelites, on whom God had inflicted so grievous a punishment. He then shews that the tribe of Judah, nay, that the very inhabitants and citizens of Jerusalem were not better than others, and that they could not be exempted, as it were, by privilege, except they returned to a right mind, except they seasonably and from the heart repented.

He then adds, *Lest my fury go forth like fire.* The Prophet here expressly declares, that the Jews were not to wait until God came forth as an avenger; for then, he says, it would be too late to repent: in short, he bids them to anticipate in due time the judgment of God; for if once his fury went forth, it would burn like fire so as to consume them, and there would be no extinguishing of it. But if they repented, he holds forth to them the hope of pardon; for the fury of God had not yet gone forth.

He afterwards subjoins, *On account of the wickedness of your deeds.*[1] By these words the Prophet again reproves them sharply, and shews that they gained nothing by their evasions; for when God ascends his tribunal and begins to execute his vengeance, then all vain excuses will come to an end, such as, that they deserved no such thing, or, that the atrocity of their sins was not great: "God," he says, "will, with his own hand, teach you how grievous has been the atrocity of your vices; he will not, then, deal with you in words." It then follows—

[1] Rather, "On account of the evil of your doings." Their doings were evil or wrong, both as to God and man. Impiety seems to be the special evil intended, as their defection from God had been more particularly referred to.—*Ed.*

5. Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

6. Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not; for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

5. Nuntiate (*vel*, promulgate) in Jehudah, et Jerusalem facite audire, (*hoc est*, publicate,) et dicite et clangite tuba in terra; vocate, colligite et dicite, Congregamini, et intremus civitates munitas.

6. Tollite signum (*vel*, vexillum) in Sion; congregamini (*vel*, confugite; *alii vertunt*, viriliter agite, *deducunt enim hoc verbum ab* נוּס; *sed plures sequuntur diversum sensum ab* נוּס, *quod est* fugere, *vel*, se colligere *metus causa*,) ne stetis (*vel*, non stabitis,) quoniam malum ego accerso (venire facio) ab aquilone, et contritionem magnam.

Jeremiah treats his own people here with more severity, for he saw that they were refractory, and so obstinate in their vices, that they could not by wise counsels be restored to the way of safety. Hence he addresses them here as men wholly irreclaimable, and to whom instruction proved useless. But though, according to the manner of the prophets, he sounds a trumpet for the sake of filling them with terror, he seems yet to speak tauntingly, when he bids them to *proclaim in Judah*, and *to publish in Jerusalem;* as though he had said, When distress shall seize you, you will then by experience perceive that God is angry with you: though to-day ye believe not my warnings; yet that God may not, indeed, by a violent hand, bring you back to himself, and as ye seek evasions for yourselves, ye shall sound the trumpet, and proclaim, "The enemies are coming, and are nigh at hand; let, therefore, every one flee to Jerusalem, and enter into the city, and resort unto Zion:" that is, "If we cannot secure our safety in the city, we shall at least be safe in the fortress of Sion." But God, he says, *brings an evil on you from the north;* and whatever ye may think will be for your safety will be wholly useless. It is, however, proper, especially to regard the Prophet as God's herald proclaiming war; and that though he exults over their perverseness, he yet declares that such would be everywhere the terror, that they would seek safety by flight.

Sound, he says, *in Judah, and publish*, or proclaim, *in Jerusalem*, (הגידו, *egidu*, announce, literally.) He speaks not here for the same purpose as Joel did, (Joel i. 1, 15,)

when he bade them to sound the trumpet; for the latter exhorted the people to repent; but Jeremiah, as I have already said, tauntingly reproves here the people for their obstinacy and perverseness; as though he had said, "I see what ye will do, when God's vengeance shall come upon you, that ye may not even then repent; for ye will sound the trumpet through the whole land, 'Let all resort to Sion;' as though ye could resist there your enemies, and preserve your lives." He does not, then, bid them to sound the trumpet, but, on the contrary, shews what they would do.

Some improperly give this rendering, "Fulfil ye," but the common version is, "Assemble yourselves." But interpreters seem not to me to have regarded the etymology of the word; for it is of the same meaning in Hebrew as when we say, *Amassez-vous*, Gather yourselves. *And say, Be ye assembled, and let us go into fortified cities.* It will, indeed, be announced to you to seek hiding-places to protect you from the assaults of your enemies; if so, *Raise a banner in Sion, and flee;* but God will at the same time *bring evil* on you *from the north.*

The words אל־תעמדו, *al-tomedu*, may be explained in two ways,—"Stand not," that is, "Hasten quickly," as it is the case with those in extreme fear; or, "Ye shall not stand," that is, "Though ye may seek a firm position on Mount Sion, ye shall not yet be able to continue there." The first exposition appears to me the best, as it is more suitable to the context.[1]

[1] These two verses contain a very spirited address, in a style truly poetical,—

5. Announce ye in Judah,
And in Jerusalem publish, and say,—
Yea, sound the trumpet in the land,
Proclaim, do it fully, and say,—
"Be assembled, and let us enter into fortified cities;
6. Raise a banner towards Sion;
Hasten ye, stay not:"
For an evil am I bringing from the north,
And a great destruction.

The people of Judah were summoned to enter into fortified cities, and Mount Sion was to be the resort of the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "Hasten ye," σπεύσατε—hasten, *Septuagint*. This is the meaning of עז in Hiphil. See Ex. ix. 19; Is. x. 31. In chap. vi. 1, it is translated "Gather yourselves to flee;" but "hasten," or remove vigorously or quickly, would be the best rendering.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not daily to alienate ourselves from thee by our sins, and as thou yet kindly exhortest us to repent, and promisest to be appeasable and propitious to us,—O grant, that we may not perversely go on in our sins, and be ungrateful to thee for thy great kindness; but that we may so return to thee, that our whole life may testify that our repentance has been unfeigned, and that we may so acquiesce in thee alone, that the depraved lusts of our flesh may not draw us here and there, but that we may continue fixed and immovable in our purpose, and so labour to obey thee through the whole course of our life, that we may at length partake of the fruit of our obedience in thy celestial kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Fifteenth.

7. The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; *and* thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

7. Ascendit leo ex densitate sua (*hoc est*, ex oculto loco,) et vastator gentium profectus est; egressus est è loco suo ad ponendum (ut ponat) terram tuam in vastitatem, urbes tuæ perdentur, ut non sit habitator.

THE Prophet more fully declares the import of the threatening which we briefly considered yesterday; for God said in the former verse, that he would *bring an evil from the north;* and the kind of evil it was to be he now describes, and compares the king of Babylon to a lion; and afterwards, without a figure, he calls him the *destroyer of nations.*

By the similitude of lion he means that the Israelites would not be able to resist; and when he adds that he would be the desolator of nations, he intimates that they would perish with the rest: for if Nebuchadnezzar was sufficiently able to destroy many nations, how could the Jews escape a similar calamity? *He shall come*, he says, *the desolator of nations.* But he uses the past tense throughout, in order to shew the certainty of the prediction, and thus to shake secure men with fear, who had become torpid in their hypocrisy; for they would have otherwise deemed all threatenings as nothing: for as long as God spared them, they

despised his judgment, and promised themselves impunity in their sins. Hence the Prophet, in order to awake them, set the matter before them, as though Nebuchadnezzar had already come with a strong and powerful army to lay waste Judea; for he says, that a lion had *ascended from his hiding-places:* but the term for the last word means an entangled density, as when trees are entwined together, or when a place is filled with thorns.[1]

But the similitude is most suitable, because the Jews never thought that the king of Babylon would come forth from places so remote; for the passing through was difficult, and the expedition attended with great toil: yet the Prophet says, that the lion would come from his recesses, and that nothing would hinder him from breaking forth and coming to the open country. He at last concludes by saying, that the *cities would be laid waste,*[2] *so as to be without an inhabitant.* It now follows—

8. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us.

8. Super hoc accingite vos saccis, plangite et ululate; quia non aversus est furor iræ Jehovæ à nobis.

The Prophet seems not yet to exhort his own nation to repent: a more gracious doctrine will presently follow; but here he only reminds them that a most grievous mourning was nigh at hand; for he saw that they were hypocrites, immersed in their own delusions, and could not be assailed by any fear. Hence he says, that they were greatly mistaken, if they thought themselves safe while God was angry with them.

Gird yourselves in sackcloth, he says, *lament and howl;* and then follows the reason, *because the fury of God's wrath was not turned away* from them. We indeed know, that the ungodly are wont to make God subservient to them-

[1] The word "thicket," in our version, correctly expresses it; a tangled wood, where trees cross and entwine with each other.—*Ed.*

[2] "Laid waste" is the Chaldee sense; but the verb means in Hebrew to germinate, to produce grass, to grow over with grass as ruined cities do. The words which follow, "without an inhabitant," shew that this meaning suits here,—

Thy cities shall grow over with grass, without an inhabitant.

The *Targum* is,

Thy cities shall be desolate without an inhabitant.—*Ed.*

selves, as though they could by their perverseness turn aside or drive afar off his judgment, and restrain, as it were, his hand from acting. As, then, hypocrites are insolent towards God, the Prophet says expressly that the fury of his wrath was not turned away: and thus he warns them, that they would be in every way miserable until they were reconciled to God.

We now understand the design of the Prophet; for he confirms what the last verse contains, when he said that a lion had come forth, and that a desolator was already nigh; yea, he confirms what he had said, for there was no hope to them without having God propitious, and he declares that God was angry. Hence it follows, that all things would prove infelicitous to them.

9. And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the Lord, *that* the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

9. Et erit die illo, dicit Jehova, peribit cor Regis et cor procerum, et obstupescent sacerdotes, et prophetæ mirabuntur (*vel*, attoniti erunt).

As the royal dignity still continued with the Jews, though their power was greatly diminished, they, relying on that distinction, hoped that they had a sufficient protection: hence it was, that they were not moved by any denunciation; for the royal power, which remained not altogether secure, and yet so in some degree, was to them like a shield. We also know what pride filled the courtiers; for they extolled their kings, and thus made a show of their prudence and magnanimity. Since, then, this foolish notion of the chief men respecting their king, and their delusive boasting, deceived the Jews, the Prophet says, *In that day perish shall the heart of the king, and the heart of the princes.*

By *heart* he no doubt means the understanding or the mind, as the word is to be taken in many other places. Moses says, "God has not yet given you a heart to understand." (Deut. xxix. 4.) The Latins also call men "hearted" (*cordatos*) who excel in intelligence and wisdom.[1] So, then,

[1] Though the most common meaning of לֵב, heart, is what is here stated, yet it means also strength, firmness, courage. See Deut. xx. 2, 3; 2 Sam. xvii. 10; Ps. xxii. 14; lxxiii. 26. And this meaning is most suitable to this passage.—*Ed.*

the Prophet shews, that it was a vain and deceptive fancy for the people to expect that the king would be an invincible defence to them; for "the king," he says, "shall then be deprived of understanding and reason; and the counsellors, who lay claim to understanding, shall be found then to be wholly foolish: there is, then, no ground for that vain confidence which deceives you." The Prophet briefly intended to shake off that false confidence, by which the Jews were inebriated, when they thought that there was a sure safety in the intelligence of the king and princes.

He says the same thing respecting the priests as well as the prophets, as much glory belonged to the priestly order; for the tribe of Levi had not taken that honour to itself, but God himself had set priests over the people. Hence an opinion prevailed, that the priests could not be without understanding and wisdom. With regard to the prophets, Jeremiah no doubt conceded the name to impostors, who falsely professed the name of God; and this way of speaking is common in the writings of the prophets. He does not, then, mean those true and faithful ministers of God, who duly executed their office, but those who boasted of the name and title: and he says of these, that they would *be astonished.*[1]

He, in short, deprives the people of that false confidence, through which they hardened themselves, so as not to fear God's judgment.

But this passage is entitled to special notice, because it shews that God's grace is not to be tied either to ranks of men or to titles. The prophetic office had always been in high repute; nor was the priestly without honour, for it was founded on God's command; but Jeremiah nevertheless de-

[1] The verse is as follows,—

And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah,
That perish shall the heart of the king
And the heart of the princes,
And confounded shall be the priests,
And the prophets shall be astonished.

"Confounded," that is, like persons at their wit's end, not knowing what to do, or what course to take. "Astonished," or amazed, that is, at witnessing the reverse of what they had prophesied; being filled with stunning and stupifying amazement.—*Ed.*

clares, that there would be no understanding in the priests and in the prophets, because they would become stupified and astonished. And with regard to the king, we know that he was the representative of Christ; and yet he pronounces the same thing of the king, and also of his counsellors,—that they would be made blind by the just vengeance of God, so as not to see anything. He afterwards adds—

10. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

10. Et dixi, Ha, ha, Domine Jehova, certè decipiendo decepisti populum hunc et Jerosolymam, dicendo, Pax erit vobis; et pertigit gladius usque ad animam (tamen pertigit, *nam hic copula vice adversativæ ponitur*).

Some so understand this passage as though the Prophet brought forward what was said by the people; for all the most wicked, when oppressed by God's hand, usually cast the blame on him, and in their complaints contend and dispute with him. Hence they think that the Prophet here, not in his own person, but in that of the whole people, speaks thus: "O Lord, what can this be? thou surely hast deceived us." Others give somewhat a looser explanation, that the Prophet here indirectly expostulates with God, because he had suffered the false prophets to flatter the people so as to stupify the minds of all. But a different meaning is what I approve of: the Prophet, I think, tauntingly exposes those false adulations, by which the prophets had caused the ruin of the miserable Jews, by promising them God's forgiveness, and by ever announcing favourable predictions.

God no doubt rendered the Jews their just reward, when he suffered them to be deceived by impostors: we, indeed, know that the world is ever afflicted with this disease,—that they seek flatteries, as God upbraids them by Micah: "Ye seek prophets who promise to you an abundant harvest, an abundant vintage." (Mic. ii. 11.) Since, then, the Jews wished their vices to be spared, and not only disliked their faithful and severe reprovers, but also hated them, they had deserved to be thus dealt with: it was God's will that many impostors should assume the prophetic name. Thus it happened, that the Jews thought that their peaceable condition would be perpetual; and this, as I have said, is usual with

hypocrites. Now the Prophet, in a biting strain, exposes here these deceptions, and says, *Ah, ah, Jehovah! surely thou hast deceived this people:* for the Prophet does not speak in the person of the people, nor does he complain, that God permitted so much liberty to false prophets; but he derides these impostors as well as the people. And further, as they were all deaf, he turns to God, as though he had said, "Behold, Lord, worthy of this reward are they, who have sought flatteries, and have not attended to the holy warnings of thy servants: as, then, no kind of correction was what they could endure, let them now begin to learn that they have been deceived by others rather than by thee."[1]

We then see that the Prophet ridicules that stupidity in which the Jews had been so long asleep; and the simple meaning is, that he turned to God: *I have said, O Lord Jehovah, surely thou hast deceived this people.* "Surely" is to be taken in an ironical sense; that is, "It now really appears that they have been deceived; but by whom? They wish, indeed, to throw the blame on thee; but they are justly chargeable with foolish credulity, so that they, whom the false prophets have deceived, have been rightly dealt with." What they said was, *Peace shall be to you.*

[1] There are various expositions of this verse: but the simpler and the plainer mode would be to take אמר as a noun, word, speech, saying, with an auxiliary verb, which is commonly omitted in Hebrew. The connection with the foregoing would be obvious and natural,—

And the saying *will be*, "Alas! Lord Jehovah,
Surely, deceiving thou hast deceived
This people and Jerusalem,
By saying, 'Peace shall be to you;'
And reach does the sword even to the soul."

This would be the language of such as believed the false prophets, and considered them as sent by God.

But *Lowth, Henry, Venema, Scott,* and others, take this view,—that God had permitted or suffered the people to be deceived by the false prophets. It is said that this verb in Hiphil, as the case is here, has sometimes this meaning, and *Lowth* refers, as instances, to Is. lxiii. 17, and also to Ps. cxix. 10; Prov. x. 3. But the *sentiment* of the passage in this case would not be very suitable: for, according to this view, the cause of the Prophet's grief is, that God had suffered the people to be deceived.

"It shall be said," in the next verse, seems to be put in contrast with this "saying." Instead of what would be commonly said of the people, God reminds them of what he would cause to be said and effected.—*Ed.*

This never came from the mouth of God; for Jeremiah daily thundered and threatened approaching ruin; for he was like a celestial herald, who filled every place with terror; but he was not heard: and at the same time the Jews praised the false prophets, who soothed them with various promises. We hence perceive, that God had not spoken peace to them; but that the Jews, not only willingly, but with avidity, laid hold on those things by which the false prophets sought to gratify them.

He afterwards adds, *And reached has the sword unto the soul;* that is, "Yet we are now destroyed by fatal evils." The Prophet here indirectly sets before them those delusive flatteries with which the Jews pleased themselves, and shews that they would at length really find how falsely they pretended the name of God. It follows—

11. At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse,

12. *Even* a full wind from those *places* shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them.

11. In tempore illo dicetur populo huic (*hoc est*, de populo hoc; ל *enim hic accipitur pro* ב,) et de Jerusalem, ventus siccus (*alii transferunt*, vehementem) in excelsis deserti (in deserto, *ad verbum*,) versus viam filiæ populi mei, non ad spargendum, neque ad purgandum;

12. Ventus plenior illis veniet mihi: nunc etiam ego loquar judicia cum illis (*hoc est*, proferam judicia cum illis.)

Jeremiah proceeds with the same prediction: he says, that a terrible *wind* was coming, which would not only *disperse* or *clear away*, but dissipate and overthrow all things. He then expresses how great and how grievous would be the calamity which he had before mentioned. He compares it to dry or arid wind; for צַח, *tsach*, sometimes means "clear," and sometimes "arid," as the greatest dryness is found on high places. He means, no doubt, here the wind, which is violent, and disturbs the whole atmosphere, when there are no clouds, and where no trees impede its course. Hence, he speaks of high and desert places. It is the same as though he had said, that so great would be the violence of God's vengeance, and so irresistible would be the eruption, that it would be like a violent wind when it passes through high regions and through dry land or desert places. He says, *Towards the way of the daughter of my people;* as though

he had said,—that the course of the wind would be such as to bear directly on Judea. The mode of speaking here used is well known to all who are in any degree acquainted with the writings of the prophets. "The daughter of my people," means the people themselves. *Come*, then, *shall wind* towards Judea.

He then adds, *Not to scatter nor to cleanse.* Husbandmen are wont to winnow the corn when taken from the thrashing-floor, that the chaff may be carried away by the wind: but the Prophet says, that this wind would not be to clear away or scatter the chaff; for it will be, he says, a very *vehement wind.* He means, in short, that God would shew so much displeasure towards the Jews, that he would no longer chastise them in a moderate degree, or use any moderation, as he had done previously; for God had already often punished the Jews, but had hitherto acted the part of a physician, having endeavoured to heal the vices of the people. As, then, these corrections had been without fruit, the Prophet now says, that God's wrath would now come, not to cleanse as before, nor to scatter the chaff, but to consume everything among the people. Hence he adds (for the two verses are connected together) *a fuller wind*, or one more complete, *shall come* to them. Some read, "from these places," so they render מ; but it is rather to be taken as noting the comparative degree,—that this wind would be much rougher and more violent than other winds which usually clear the land or scatter away the chaff, and separate it from the corn: *come*, then, *shall a much more violent wind.*

And come, he says, *unto me.* God, I doubt not, speaks here. Some think that the Prophet here represents the whole body of the people; and they consider them as saying, that there would come a wind which would rush on themselves. But this is too strained; and further, this explanation is disproved by the context: nor can what follows be applied to the Prophet, *I will now pronounce judgments against them.* Here then God, in his office as a judge, declares that a wind was nigh, by which he would dissipate and overthrow the whole of Judea, and would no more cleanse

it. And thus he shews, that the Chaldeans would not of themselves come, but would be sent to execute his orders; as though he had said,—that he would be the author of those calamities which were impending over the Jews: *come*, then, *shall wind unto me;* that is, it will be ready to obey my orders.

And he adds at last, by way of an exposition, *I will then speak judgments with them.* To speak judgments is to execute the office of a judge, or to call to judgment, or to summon men to declare their cause, as kings are said to speak judgments when they constrain the guilty to render an account of themselves. God briefly intimates, that he had hitherto exercised great forbearance towards the Jews; but that as he found that his indulgence availed nothing, except that they became more and more ferocious, he declares, that he would now become their judge to punish their wickedness.[1] He afterwards adds—

[1] The *Septuagint* version of these two verses is as foreign to the original as it can well be; and the *Syriac* and *Arabic* are nearly the same. The *Vulgate* gives a fair version; and the meaning, as given by the *Targum*, is nearly the same. The latter part of the 11th and 12th, are thus rendered by *Blayney*,—

A wind that scorcheth the plains in the wilderness,
[Shall come] toward the daughter of my people,
Not to winnow, nor to cleanse;
12. A full wind for a curse shall come at my bidding;
Now even I will proceed judicially with them.

Horsley differs as to the 11th verse, and renders it thus,—

The wind that scorcheth the craggy rocks of the wilderness
Taketh its course against the daughter of my people,
Not for winnowing or cleansing.

The reason assigned for rendering מאלה "for a curse," and not "from those *places*," as in our version, is, because the enemy did not come from that quarter. But this may be avoided, if we consider "as" or "like" to be understood before wind, which is no uncommon thing in Hebrew. To refer "those" or these to the winds implied in winnowing and cleansing, as *Calvin* does, and also *Gataker* and others, is not satisfactory. I would propose the following version,—

The dry wind of the cliffs in the wilderness
Is advancing against the daughter of my people,
Not to winnow, nor to cleanse;
12. *As* a full wind from these, it shall come for me:
Then will I myself pronounce judgments on them.

The word דרך, as *Horsley* takes it, is a verb, or rather a participle; and it is usual in Hebrew to put a participle in the first clause, and in the second a verb, as here, in the future tense. The verb means to come

13. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots *shall be* as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

13. Ecce tanquam nubes ascendet, et tanquam turbo currus ejus; celeriores aquilis equi ejus: væ nobis, quia perditi sumus.

The Prophet here concludes the prediction which referred to the dreadful vengeance that was coming; and he mentions here several similitudes, such as might rouse the Jews and constrain them to fear. He says, that the *chariots* of God would *come as clouds and as a whirlwind;* and then that his *horses* would be *swifter than eagles.*

As to the clouds, the whirlwind, and the eagles, (for the import of the three similitudes is the same,) the Prophet no doubt intended thus to set forth the quickness of God's vengeance; but yet there is some difference. We see how *clouds* suddenly arise and spread over the whole heaven; and thus it happens when a *whirlwind* is in the air. Hence when he compares God's chariots to clouds and the whirlwind, it is the same as if he had said, that the beginning of the calamity would be sudden, because God would unexpectedly arise, after having been apparently asleep for a long time. But when he says, that *God's horses* would be *swifter than eagles,* he means, that it would be easy for God, when once he had begun, to destroy the whole of Judea, as it were in a moment, or at least in a very short time; for we know how swift is the flying of the eagle; but he says, that the *horses* of God would be *swifter than the eagles.*

We now understand the Prophet's meaning: for when the Jews derided the threatenings of the Prophets, they tauntingly used such a language as this,—"O! we shall, at least in the meantime, feast cheerfully and joyfully; these Prophets will not allow us a truce for one hour; but yet many years will pass away before the evil overtakes us." We find profane men in our day, who in like manner trifle with God: and when they cannot wholly despise what God threatens, they yet delay the time, and think that they gain something by putting off the day of vengeance. This, then, was the

upon, so as to tread down or subdue, Judges v. 21; xx. 43; Ps. xci. 13. "The effect of this wind is not only to render the air extremely hot and scorching, but to fill it with poisonous and suffocating vapours."—*Blayney.* —*Ed.*

reason why the Prophet said, that God's chariots would ascend, as clouds arise suddenly, and then as a whirlwind in a clear sky, and lastly, in a manner swifter than the eagles, even in their swiftest course.

The Prophet, in the last place, exclaims, in the name of the whole people, *Woe to us! for we are lost.*[1] He speaks here concisely, that he might shew that the false prophets, as well as the people, were going astray to their own ruin, while they were asleep in their vices, and thought their insensibility would escape punishment. He hence exclaims, that though all were then seized with stupor, the people themselves were yet lost. It at length follows—

14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?	14. Munda à malitia cor tuum, Jerusalem, ut salva sis: quousque manebunt in medio tui cogitationes vanitatis tuæ? (*alii vertunt*, doloris tui; *alii*, concupiscentiæ tuæ; *alii*, iniquitatis, *ac si esset* עונך.)

Here now the Prophet expressly and avowedly exhorts the people to repent. By bidding Jerusalem to *wash from wickedness* her *heart*, that she might be *saved*, he shews that there was no remedy, except the Jews were reconciled to God; and that this could not be, except they repented of their sins. He had said before, that while God was angry they could not but perish; he now confirms the same thing, —*that thou mayest be saved, wash thine heart from wickedness;* as though he had said, that there was war between the Jews and God, and that salvation could by no means be hoped for, since God was armed for their destruction, and shewed himself a judge to punish their vices: he at the same time reminds them of the true way of repentance; it was by washing their heart from wickedness. For hypocrites ever seek to appease God by external rites and observances;

[1] Rather, "We have been wholly wasted," or desolated. The verb is in a reduplicate form, and signifies an entire waste or desolation,—

13. Behold, like clouds will he ascend,
And like a whirlwind *will be* his chariots,
Swifter than eagles his horses:
"Woe to us! for we have been wholly wasted."

The mixture of the tenses is intended to shew the certainty of the event. Or we may consider the last line as containing what would be said after the coming of the enemy. What they would have to say was to acknowledge their entire desolation.—*Ed.*

but the Prophet shews that God cannot be pacified, except they from the heart return to him. He then means that the beginning of true repentance is an inward feeling. We now perceive what the Prophet means.

But they reason foolishly who maintain that repentance is the cause of salvation, because it is said, "That thou mayest be saved, wash thy heart from wickedness:" and the Papists lay hold on such passages to set up free-will; and they hold that sins are abolished and punishment remitted through satisfactions made by us. But this is extremely absurd and frivolous. For the Prophet is not speaking of the cause of salvation; but, as I have said, he simply shews that men are extremely thoughtless when they expect a peaceable condition, while they carry on war with God, and when he is armed to execute vengeance on them. We are not then to inquire here, whether a sinner delivers himself from God's hand by his repentance: but the Prophet had only this one thing in view—that we cannot be safe and secure, except God be reconciled to us. He further shews, that God will not be propitious to us, except we repent, and that from the heart or from a genuine feeling within.

He then adds, *How long shall remain within thee the thoughts of thy vanity?* He here touches on the hypocrisy of his own nation; and he in effect says, that whatever excuses they might make, they were yet proved guilty before God, and that their evasions were frivolous, because God penetrated into the inmost recesses of their hearts. He indeed speaks most suitably, for he had to do with hypocrites who thought that their outward performances pacified God; and they also thought that when they alleged their evasions they ought to be forgiven, as they could not be condemned by earthly judges. The Prophet derides these delusive thoughts, *How long shall thoughts of vanity remain within thee?* that is, "Though the whole world were to absolve thee, what yet would it avail thee? For vain thoughts remain in the midst of thee, that is, in the recesses of thy heart; and God knows them, for nothing is hid from him. There is then no reason for you to think that ye will gain anything by your outward display or your excuses; for God is

the searcher of hearts. Let not these thoughts continue within thee."

He calls them the thoughts of *vanity*. The word, אָוֶן, *aun*, means sometimes substance, but it also means power, and sometimes grief, and sometimes vanity or trouble. The Prophet means here, I have no doubt, trouble or vanity. But some expound it as signifying lust; but I know not whether it can be so taken. Either of the two foregoing meanings may suit the passage, though *vanity* seems the best, *How long*, then, *shall thoughts of vanity remain within thee?* that is, by which thou deceivest thyself: for when God suspended his vengeance, the Jews thought that they had escaped from his hand.[1] They might, at the same time, have been called the thoughts of trouble or sorrow from the effect; for how could it have been otherwise, but they must have found that they had procured a heavier judgment for themselves, by trifling with the indulgence and forbearance of God? Too strained is the explanation given by some, who render the words, "thoughts of grief," because the Jews had done many wrongs to their neighbours, and caused them

[1] The word means also iniquity, wickedness: and this is the sense in which the *Vulgate* and the *Targum* have taken it, and also *Blayney*, "the devices of thine iniquity:" and this corresponds more with the former part of the verse. The whole is as follows,—

14. Wash from evil thine heart,
O Jerusalem, that thou mayest be saved:
How long shall lodge within thee
The thoughts of thy wickedness,
or,
Thy wicked thoughts.

The word for "wash" here, according to *Parkhurst*, is ever applied to express a thorough washing, the washing away of what is inherent, such as the dirt of linen and of clothes: and he says, that there is another word, רחץ, which is used when the washing of the surface of anything is intended, such as the washing of hands. "Shall lodge,"—it is no objection that this is singular, and the "thoughts" plural. It is an idiom: the same exists in *Welsh*: and in no other form would this sentence be rendered in that language. The present translation is incorrect, as the verb is taken to be in the second person, and applied to Jerusalem; which cannot be, as in that case it must have been in the feminine gender. The correct rendering would be,—

Pa hyd y lletya o'th fewn
Dy feddyliau drygionus!

If the verb had *followed* its nominative case, it would have been in the same number; but as it precedes it, it is singular while the noun is plural.—*Ed.*

unjust vexations. I therefore doubt not but that the Prophet refers to those deceptive hopes, by which the Jews grew more perverse against God, so as not to fear any punishment.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou art pleased daily to invite us to repentance, and since our own conscience is a witness, how we have in various ways provoked thy vengeance,—O grant, that we may not remain obstinate in our sins, nor harden our minds by perverse delusions, but suffer ourselves to be subdued by thy word, and so offer ourselves to thee with a pure and sincere heart, that our whole life may be nothing else but a striving for that newness which thou requirest; so that, being consecrated to thee in mind and body, we may ever labour to glorify thy name, until we be made partakers of that glory, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Sixteenth.

15. For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim.

15. Quia vox annuntians è Dan, et promulgans cladem (*vel*, pœnam) è monte Ephraim (*alii vertunt*, iniquitatem אָוֶן).

THE Prophet again repeats what he had said,—that the Jews were given up, on account of their perverseness, to final ruin; for they had so often and for so long a time provoked God, and had not attended to pious admonitions, when God by his servants the prophets offered pardon to them on their repentance. But the whole passage, which I shall now explain, gives a lively representation of the ruin that was at hand; for we see that in this verse there is a scene presented to us, as the Prophet sets before our eyes what could not be fully expressed in words.

A voice, he says, *declares from Dan.* This was the extreme border on the north. He had before said, that an evil was coming from that quarter, that is, from the north; for God had chosen the Chaldeans as the executors of his vengeance: hence he says, "a voice is heard from Dan;" not that there was an army already prepared to attack the Jews, but Jeremiah speaks here by the prophetic spirit; and he sets the event as present before the Jews, who though not that so

grievous an evil was nigh. For we said yesterday, that when God for a time spares hypocrites, they become more hardened, and with haughty contempt deride his prophets. When, therefore, Jeremiah saw that he had to do with blocks, he deemed it necessary to use figurative language, which exhibited to them more clearly that the judgment, which the Jews imagined they had no reason to fear, was near at hand: hence he says, *a voice is heard from Dan.*

And proclaims אָוֶן, *aun*, that is, trouble, or punishment, or ruin. The other rendering, to which I have referred, is not suitable. The word אָוֶן, *aun*, does indeed properly signify iniquity; but it is to be taken here for punishment.[1] But whenever the Prophets use this term, they intimate that evil is not inflicted by God except for just causes; and they remind us that its source or fountain is to be found in the wickedness of men. *Ruin* then was coming from *Mount Ephraim*, which was near the tribe of Judah and also Jerusalem. But it was the same as though Jeremiah had said, that God was now thundering from heaven, and that it would be of no avail to the Jews to close their ears: for though they were even deaf, yet God's vengeance would soon come to light, accompanied with dreadful noise. It follows—

16. Make ye mention to the nations: behold, publish against Jerusalem, *that* watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

16. Memorate in gentibus (*vel*, ad gentes,) ecce promulgate super Jerusalem, obsessores veniunt è terra longinqua, et mittunt super urbes Jehudah vocem suam.

The beginning of this verse is variously explained. Some read, "Remember ye the nations," and think that the Prophet says this, because many of the nations were heralds of that vengeance of God, which the Jews despised, as they thought that what the true heralds of God declared were mere fables. They therefore take the meaning of this passage, as though Jeremiah sent the Jews to the nations, intimating that they were unworthy that God should send them as usual teachers. But as the verb is in Hiphil, we

[1] The first meaning of the word is iniquity, wickedness; and as the fruit or the effect of wickedness is affliction, distress, misery, it is sometimes taken to express the latter idea. It may be rendered here, distress. —*Ed.*

ought rather to read, *Rehearse* it: and some give this explanation, "Rehearse," or tell, "of the nations;" that is, "Announce that the Chaldeans are hastening to lay waste the land, to pull down the cities of Judah and to destroy the people." But there is a third meaning which, in my judgment, comports better with the passage. He literally says, *Rehearse it to the nations; behold, proclaim against Jerusalem:* for as the Prophet saw that he spent his labour in vain on that stupid people, who had become so hardened in their perverseness, that they were wholly inattentive and unteachable, he turned his address to the nations, and said, "Rehearse it to the Gentiles;" as though he had said, "I have long ago reminded this people, that God had other teachers; but what have we gained by our labour, except that the people become continually worse: since then it is so, now he says, 'Declare it to the nations concerning Jerusalem;' let the Jews hear nothing more of their ruin, but let God's vengeance on them be made known to the heathens." There is nothing strained or obscure in this explanation; and it is wholly consonant with the prophetic style.[1]

He then deigned no longer to favour his own nation with heavenly truth; for this would have to cast what was holy to the dogs; but he directs his discourse to the heathens, as though he had said, "There is more knowledge in the blind and unbelieving than in the chosen people of God." This does not shew but that he afterwards continued a long time in the discharge of his office; for the prophets, inflamed with zeal for God, often threatened the people with utter ruin, and afterwards performed their charge and tried whether they, of whom they seemed to despair, were healable.

He says that *besiegers* would *come from a far country.* Some render נֹצְרִים, *netserim*, keepers; and they think that

[1] The verb in the first sentence followed by ל is found in Amos vi. 10; where it clearly means "to make mention of," or simply, to mention. So it may be rendered here, "Make ye mention of the nations," or, Mention the nations, that is, for the sake of frightening the Jews. He had before referred to the voice from Dan, &c.; he now commands the invading nations to be proclaimed as approaching. The meaning is not, as *Blayney*, as well as *Calvin*, renders the phrase, "Proclaim ye unto the nations," but, "Proclaim the nations," as approaching, according to what is afterwards stated. — *Ed.*

Jeremiah alludes to Nebuchadnezzar, because his captains would come to destroy Jerusalem and to demolish the cities of Judah. But I prefer to render the word "besiegers." Though some think that נצר, *netser*, sometimes means to destroy or lay waste; yet the other meaning seems more suitable, as it appears evident from the next verse. To render it keepers, seems to be frigid; though this is what is done almost by all. I render it "besiegers,"—*Come* then *shall besiegers;* for נצר, *netser*, means not only to keep, but also to shut up in a strait place. *Come*, he says, *shall besiegers from a far country.* He used these expressions, that the people might not promise themselves impunity, as it has been before stated, through the forbearance of God: for when God deferred his vengeance, they thought themselves relieved from all fear. Hence he says, that though the enemy was not as yet present, though they did not as yet hear the sound of the coming enemy, God at the same time did not threaten them in vain; for he would in an instant send for those from a distant land, who would execute his vengeance.

What follows, *they shall send forth their voice against the cities of Judah*, is added, in order that the Jews might know that they could by no hinderances prevent God from bringing quickly the Chaldeans to terrify their cities by their sound. What he indeed means is the shout by which soldiers rouse one another to fight: but as this is commonly done as a sign of victory, he intimates that it was all over with the Jews; for the soldiers had as it were already uttered their triumphant shoutings.[1] It follows—

17. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord.

17. Sicuti custodes (*est aliud nomen quàm prius* שמרים) agri erunt super eam in circuitu; quia me exacerbarit, dicit Jehova.

[1] To make this verse consistent with the context, I render it as follows,—

Mention ye the nations, (and say,) "Behold *them!*"
Repeat at Jerusalem,
"The watchers are coming from a distant land,
And shall raise against the cities of Judah their voice."

It is not improbable that על here means "over," and that the "voice" means a triumphant shout, as *Calvin* seems to have thought. Then we may give this rendering,—

And shall raise over the cities of Judah their shout.—*Ed.*

He intimates here that there would be no escape to the Jews when God brought the Chaldeans, for every egress, all the ways, would be closed up, so that they could not migrate to another land. It is the same as though he had said, that such a calamity was nigh them that they could not escape it by exile. It is indeed a sad thing when men flee away naked as from the fire, and seek a place among strangers, and live there in misery and want; but the Prophet declares here, that so grievous was the punishment prepared for the Jews, that it would not indeed be possible for them to save themselves by expatriation and flight, for God would close up every avenue, and would as it were set guards to prevent any to depart.

He afterwards assigns a reason for this, *Because they have made me angry.*[1] The Prophet again shews that God dealt not cruelly with the Jews, nor that they were visited by chance with so many and so grievous calamities, but that they suffered justly, for they had provoked the wrath of God. It would indeed have availed the Jews but little that they dreaded an approaching evil, except they acknowledged that God was punishing them for their perverseness. Hence the reason is stated: it was mentioned, that the Jews might know that these calamities were brought on them by God's hand. And for the same purpose is what follows—

18. Thy way and thy doings have procured these *things* unto thee: this *is* thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

18. Via tua et actiones tuæ fecerunt hoc tibi; hæc malitia tua, quoniam amarum, quoniam pertigit ad cor tuum (*vel*, quamvis amarum sit, et quamvis pertigerit ad cor tuum.)

As I have just said, the Prophet confirms what he had declared,—that the Jews would not have to suffer, according to what is commonly said, an adverse fortune, but would be summoned by God to judgment, in order that being touched with the fear of God, they might repent, or at least, though

[1] *Calvin* has followed the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac*. The *Septuagint* and *Arabic* have, "thou hast neglected me," which is very wide from the original. "Rebel" is the rendering of the *Targum*, which is the Hebrew, and there is no other reading. Literally it is,

For against me hath she rebelled, saith Jehovah.

And this is the rendering of *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

destroyed as to the flesh, they might yet, being humbled, obtain pardon and be saved as to the Spirit.

He therefore says, that their *deeds had done this* for them; as though he had said, "There is no reason for you to blame God, or your adverse fortune, as ye are wont to do, and as all the heathens also do; for your own deeds have procured for you these calamities. Thus God will perform his office of a judge; and whatever may happen to you is to be ascribed to your own wickedness." And to the same purpose is what he adds, *This* is *thy wickedness*. In short, the Prophet shews, that the Jews in vain transferred their calamities to this or that cause, for the whole blame was in themselves; they procured for themselves their own ruin by their impiety and evil deeds.

In the second clause of the verse, כִּי נגע, כִּי מר, *ki mer, ki nego*, &c., the Prophet intimates, that however bitter might be to them what they were to endure, and however it might penetrate into the inmost heart, it was yet to be ascribed to themselves. For hypocrites are wont in their lamentations to cast the blame on God, or at least to complain of fortune. The Prophet anticipates these evasions, by shewing that however bitter might be what the Jews had to endure, and that though God should pierce them through and penetrate to their very bowels and hearts, yet they themselves were the authors of all their calamities.[1] He then adds—

[1] *Blayney*, contrary to all the early versions, renders אֵלֶּה, "a curse," instead of "these," but there is no sufficient reason for the change. It is difficult to see what is the precise idea intended in our version as to the latter part of the verse. The meaning given by *Calvin* seems to be this,—that though the visitation was bitter and reached to the heart, it was yet to be ascribed to their wickedness. *Blayney's* version is this,—

Such is thy calamity; for it is bitterness; for it is a plague even unto thy heart.

The latter words are taken as explanatory of the calamity. The word רָעָה does indeed mean sometimes a calamity; but all the early versions, as well as the *Targum*, render it here "wickedness." Hence the most suitable rendering would be,—

Such is thy wickedness!
Though bitter, though reaching to thy heart.

That כִּי may be rendered "though" is evident from Josh. xvii. 18; and it ought to be so rendered in Ex. xxxiv. 9; and in other places. But we may take the first כִּי in its primary sense, surely, certainly, truly, and the second as a causative, for, because; an instance of a similar kind we meet

19. *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart: my heart maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*

19. Viscera mea, viscera mea doleo, parietes cordis mei (*ad verbum*, hoc est, præcordia mea,) cor meum tumultuatur mihi (*hoc est*, intra me;) non tacebo, quoniam vocem tubæ (*vel*, clangorem tubæ) audivit (*vel* audivisti) anima mea; et clamor belli auditus est (*vel*, clamorem belli audivit anima mea.)

Some interpreters think that the Prophet is here affected with grief, because he saw that his own nation would soon perish; but I know not whether this is a right view. It is indeed true, that the prophets, though severe when denouncing God's vengeance, did not yet put off the feelings of humanity. Hence they often bewailed the evils which they predicted; and this we shall see more clearly in its proper place. The prophets then had two feelings: when they were the heralds of God's vengeance, they necessarily forgot their own sensibilities; but this courage did not prevent them from feeling sorrow for others; for they could not but sympathize with their brethren, when they saw them, even their own flesh, doomed to ruin. But in this place the Prophet seems not so much to mourn the calamities of the people, but employs figurative terms in order to awaken their stupor, for he saw that they were torpid, and that they neither feared God nor were touched with any shame. Since then there was so much insensibility in the people, it was necessary for Jeremiah and other servants of God to embellish their discourses, so as not simply to teach, but also forcibly and strongly to rouse their dormant minds.

He therefore says, *My bowels, my bowels!* We shall see that the Prophet in other places thus laments, when he speaks of Babylon, of Edom, and of other enemies of his people, and why? The Prophet was not indeed affected with grief when he heard that the Chaldeans would perish, and when God declared to him the same thing respecting other heathen nations who had cruelly persecuted the holy people: but since thoughtless men, as I have said, take no notice of

[illegible] precedes in adjective, and is rendered [illegible] [illegible] the second [illegible] is a verb, and is rendered [illegible]. Then our [illegible]

[illegible]

what God from heaven threatens them with, it is necessary to use such expressions as may rouse them from their torpor. So I interpret this place: the Prophet does not express his own grief for the calamities of his people, but by the prophetic spirit enlarges on what he had previously said; for he saw that what he had stated had no effect, or was not sufficient to rouse their minds. *My bowels!* he says. He had indeed grief in his bowels, for he was a member of the community; but we now speak of his object or the purpose he had in view in speaking thus. It is not then the expression of his own grief, but an affecting description, in order that what he had said might thoroughly rouse the minds of those who heedlessly laughed at the judgment of God.

He then adds, *My heart tumultuates*, or makes a noise: the verb means to resound, and hence it is metaphorically taken for tumultuating. He speaks of the palpitation of the heart, which takes place when there is great fear. But he calls it noise or tumult, as though he had said, that he was not now master of himself, so as to retain a calm and tranquil mind, for God smote his heart with horrible dread. He afterwards adds, *I will not be silent, for the sound of the trumpet has my soul heard*, or thou, my soul, hast heard, *and the clamour of battle;* for the word מלחמה, *melechme*, is to be thus taken here. He says that he would not be *silent*, because this clamour made a noise in his heart. We hence conclude that he grieved not from a feeling of human sorrow, but he did that which he had been bidden to do by God; for he had been chosen to be the herald of God's vengeance, which was nigh, though not dreaded by the Jews.[1]

[1] Remarkably concise and striking are the words of this verse,—

My bowels! my bowels!
I am in pain! O the inclosures of my heart!
Turbulent is my heart within me;
I will not be silent; for the sound of the trumpet
Have I heard; my soul, the shout of battle.

To change the person of the verb, "I am in pain," or in labour, as it literally means, as *Blayney* does, destroys the force and the vehemence of the passage; and all the early versions retain the first person. "The inclosures," literally "the walls," that is, what incloses or surrounds the heart. He mentions first the bowels, then what surrounds the heart, and afterwards the heart itself: and his pain was like that of a woman in travail. Being in this state, he resolved not to be silent but to declare their danger to the people.—*Ed.*

Some think that *soul* is here to be taken for the prophetic spirit, for trumpets had not yet sounded, nor was yet heard the clamour of battle. They therefore suppose that there is to be understood here a contrast, that Jeremiah did not perceive the noise by his ears, but in his heart. But I know not whether this refinement may be fitly applied to the Prophet's words. I therefore think that Jeremiah means, that he spoke in earnest, because he saw God's vengeance as though it were already made evident. And this availed not a little to gain credit to what he had stated, so that the Jews might know that he did not speak of himself, nor act a part as players do on the stage. They were then to know that he did not relate what God had pronounced, but that he was God's herald in such a way, that he heard in his soul or heart, to his great terror, the tumult of war and the sound of the trumpet. It follows—

20. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment.

20. Afflictio super afflictionem vocata est; quoniam perdita est omnis terra subitò; perdita (*vel*, destructa, *est idem verbum*) sunt tabernacula mea, repente cortinæ meæ.

He pursues the same subject, but amplifies the dread by a new circumstance,—that God would heap evils on evils, so that the Jews would in vain hope for an immediate relief. By saying, *A calamity upon a calamity*, he means that the end of one evil would be the beginning of another. For it is what especially distresses miserable men, when they think that their evils will continue long. They indeed imagined that God would be satisfied with an evil that would be soon over, like a storm or a tempest: and when an alleviation appeared, they would have thought that they had suffered enough and would have returned again to their old ways and derided God as though they had escaped from his hands. For this reason the Prophet declares, that their calamities would for a long time continue, so that no end to them could be hoped for, until the Jews were wholly destroyed. By saying that calamities were *called*, or summoned, he briefly reminds them, that God would sit on his tribunal, and that after inflicting light punishment on men for their sins, he would add heavier punishment, and that when he found their wick-

edness incurable, he would proceed to extremities, so as wholly to destroy those who could not be reclaimed. *Called* then *has been distress upon distress:* and how was this? *Perished has the whole land;* and then, *my tabernacles have been suddenly destroyed, in an instant destroyed has been my curtains.*[1]

It is thought that the Prophet here compares strongly fortified cities to tents and curtains, in order to expose the foolish confidence with which the Jews were proudly filled, thinking that their cities were a sufficient protection from enemies. It is then supposed that the Prophet here deprives them of their vain confidence by calling these cities tents. There are also those who think that he alludes to his own city Anathoth, or to his own manner of life. It is indeed true that Jeremiah speaks often in other places as a shepherd; that is, he uses common and free modes of speaking. It would not then be unnatural to suppose, that he put on the character of a shepherd when he spoke of tents. Both these views may however be combined,—that he used a language common among shepherds,—and that he shews that it was a mere mockery for the Jews to think that they could easily escape, as they had on their borders many fortified cities capable of resisting the attacks of their enemies. But no less suitable view would be this,—That no corner would be safe; for their enemies would penetrate into the most retired places and destroy the smallest cottages, which might be resorted to as hiding-places.

He says *suddenly,* and *in an instant,* in order that the Jews might not promise themselves any time for negociating, and thus procrastinate, and think that they would have time enough to make their peace with God. It follows—

[1] The literal reading may be thus,—

Breach upon breach has happened;
For laid waste has been the whole land;
Suddenly laid waste have been my tents,
In a moment my curtains.

He relates what he had seen in a vision, and therefore represents the whole as past. The verb קרא in Niphal as here, as well as in Kal, means sometimes to happen, to befall, to take place. The *Syriac* and the *Targum* give it here this meaning; and *Blayney* has adopted the same.—*Ed.*

21. How long shall I see the standard, *and* hear the sound of the trumpet?

21. Usquequo videbo vexillum? audiam vocem (*vel*, clangorem) tubæ?

He concludes that part of his discourse, which, as we have said, he embellished with figurative terms, in order more fully to rouse slow and torpid minds: but he confirms what he said at the beginning of the last verse, the 20th, "Distress has been summoned upon distress." He indeed repeats in other words the same thing, *How long shall I see the standard*, he says, and *hear the sound of the trumpet?* that is, "You are greatly deceived, if ye think that your enemies, after having for a short time marched through the land, will return home: for the evil of war will for a long time afflict you, and God will protract your calamities, so that the sound of trumpets will continue, and the standard will often, and even every day, be exhibited."

We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning: He first shews, that though their enemies were afar off, they would yet come suddenly, and that the horses of God would be, according to what he said yesterday, swifter than eagles. He afterwards refers to the continued progress of the war; for it was necessary to shew to the Jews, that as they had long heedlessly despised God, so his vengeance would not be momentary, but would lie on them, so as to be without end.

Now we ought to know that at this day there is no less dulness than among the Jews. It is therefore not enough to summon the ungodly and the wicked before God's tribunal, but such metaphorical language ought to be employed as may strike terror, and constrain them to fear, though they may endeavour in every way to harden their own consciences and stupify themselves, so as to be capable of easily despising God. It is then necessary, that at the present day the servants of God should also speak more strongly and vehemently, that they may rouse hypocrites and the obstinate from their torpor. It then follows—

22. For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me; they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding: they *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

22. Quoniam stultus populus meus, me non cognovit; filii insipientes ipsi, et non intelligentes ipsi (sunt; הֵמָּה *demonstrativum pronomen* ponitur vice verbi:) astuti ipsi (*vel*, sapientes) ad malum; sed ad benefaciendum non intelligunt.

The Prophet again teaches us, that the cause of these evils arose from the people themselves, and was to be found in them, so that they could not transfer it to anybody else. Hence he says, *My people* are *foolish.* He speaks here in the person of God; for it immediately follows, *Me have they not known:* this could not have been said by Jeremiah. God then complains here of the folly of his people; whom he so calls, not by way of honour, but that he might double their reproach; for nothing could have been more disgraceful than that the people, whom God had chosen as his peculiar inheritance, should be thus demented: for why had God chosen the seed of Abraham as his adopted children, but that they might be as lamps, carrying through the world the light of salvation? "What people in the world," says Moses, "are so noble, who have gods so near them?" He says also, "This is thy knowledge and wisdom." (Deut. iv. 6, 7.) God then shews here that it was a monstrous thing, which all should regard with abhorrence, that his people should be foolish; as though he had said, "Can it be that a people whom I have chosen for myself, and with whom I have deposited the covenant of eternal salvation, whom I have instructed by my word—that this people should so madly ruin themselves?"

The *people,* then, are *foolish,* because *they have not known me.* He here expresses what was the cause of the foolishness or blindness of the people, even because they did not know God; for the knowledge of him is true wisdom. Now God thus shews that the madness of the people was inexcusable. How so? because he had made himself so familiarly known to them, that the Israelites had no occasion to ask, as Moses says, Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep? for the word was set before them. (Deut. xxx. 12-14.) As, then, God had so kindly manifested himself to the Jews, he justly complains that he was not known by them.

There are then here two things to be noticed; first, the kind of madness that is here mentioned,—the people did not know God. And we hence learn that then only are we wise when we fear God, and that we are always mad and sense-

less when we regard him not. This is one thing. Secondly, we must know that no excuse of ignorance or mistake was allowed to that people, for God had made himself known to them. And this may be applied to us: God will justly upbraid us at the last day, that we have been foolish and mad, if we are without the knowledge of him; for we have the means, as I have said, of knowing him; and there is no excuse that we can plead for our ignorance, since God has not spoken to us in an obscure manner. God in these words accused the Jews of ingratitude, and of deliberate wickedness, because they *knew* him not. But since God has at this day made himself more fully known to us, it is, as I have said, a heavier condemnation to us, and our punishment will thus be doubled, if we know not God, who is so kind to us, and deals with us so graciously.

Then he adds, that they were *foolish children*, and *not intelligent*. The antithesis in Hebrew is more emphatical than in Greek and Latin; for to say, "He is foolish, and not wise," would be in Greek and Latin frigid, as the last clause would be weaker than the former. But in Hebrew it is different; for in this way is conveyed the idea, that they were so foolish that not even the least portion of a sound mind remained in them. Even those who are foolish and senseless do yet retain some knowledge, however small it may be: hence they say, that the foolish often speak what is suitable. But the Prophet means another thing,—that the Jews were not only senseless and stupid, but that they were so destitute of all knowledge, that they were like stones or brute animals, and that they had not a particle of sound mind or of rational knowledge remaining in them.[1] The rest we shall defer to another time.

[1] The *specific* meaning of the terms used in this verse is not given in our version, nor by *Calvin*, nor by *Blayney*. The following, as I apprehend, is a literal version,—

For stupid *are* my people,
Me they do not know;
Foolish children *are* they,
And undiscerning *are* they;
Wise *are* they to do evil,
But how to do good they know not.

"Stupid," אוִיל, is one grossly ignorant, so as to be without knowledge,

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast not only once kindled among us the light of celestial truth, but also invitest us daily to partake of the salvation which has been set before us,—O grant, that we may not close our eyes, nor render deaf our ears, nor harden ourselves in our sins, but that as thou ceasest not continually to call us to thyself, so we may earnestly strive to hasten to thee, and to persevere in the course of our holy calling, so that we may draw nearer daily to its end, until thou receivest us at length into that celestial kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Seventeenth.

23. I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* without form and void; and the heavens, and they *had* no light.

24. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

25. I beheld, and, lo, *there was* no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

26. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place *was* a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, *and* by his fierce anger.

23. Vidi terram, et ecce vasta et deformis, et cœlos, et nulla lux eorum:

24. Vidi montes, et ecce contremiscentes (contremiscebant), et omnes colles movebantur:

25. Vidi, et ecce nullus homo, et omnes aves cœlorum evolaverant:

26. Vidi, et ecce regio fœcunda (*vel*, carmelus) desertum, et omnes urbes ejus destructæ à facie Jehovæ, et à facie excandescentiæ iræ ejus.

THE Prophet in this passage enlarges in a language highly metaphorical on the terror of God's vengeance, that he might rouse the Jews, who were stupid and careless: nor is the repetition in vain, when he says four times, that he *looked*. He might have spoken of the earth, heaven, men, and fertile places in one sentence: but it is the same as though he had turned his eyes to four different quarters, and said, that wherever he looked, there appeared to him dreadful tokens

and not capable of knowing how to do good, or what is the good to be done. The last line explains the two first. Then "foolish," סכלים, are the perverse, or the perverted, who are foolish through a perverted mind, who are said in the next line to be undiscerning, and who, as in the line which follows, had wisdom enough to do evil. They were stupidly ignorant, and perversely foolish. They were ignorant as to good, and wise as to evil; but this their wisdom was folly.—*Ed.*

of God's wrath, and which threatened the Jews with utter ruin. Nor is it a wonder that the Prophet is so vehement; for we know that men would have heedlessly received all threatenings, except they were violently roused. And this mode of teaching ought to be well known to us; for all in any degree acquainted with the writings of the prophets, must know that they especially pursued this course, in order to rouse hypocrites, and the despisers of God, who, with a stiff neck and a hardened heart, were not moved by any apprehension of punishment. But this passage is remarkable above most others: we ought therefore to consider the import of the Prophet's words.

He says first, that he *looked on the earth*, and that it was תהו, *teu*, and בהו, *beu*. He employs the very words which Moses adopted in his history of the creation; for before any order was introduced, he says that the earth was תהו, *teu*, and בהו, *beu*, that is, waste and unformed chaos; and it had no beauty pleasing to the eye.[1] It is the same as though

[1] These two words are viewed as synonymous by some, and the versions render them often by the same terms. As to the first, תהו, there can be no doubt as to its meaning, for it occurs about twenty times, and in all these places the idea of emptiness is chiefly conveyed: hence it is most commonly rendered in our version, vain, vanity, in vain, nought, &c., 1 Sam. xii. 21; Is. xl. 17; xlv. 18; xlix. 4. It is improperly rendered "without form," in Gen. i. 2, and "confusion" in Is. xxxiv. 11. When applied to the earth, as in Gen. i. 2, it imports emptiness, as it was then unfurnished either with productions or with any inhabitants. This appears evident from Is. xlv. 18, "He created it not in vain," rather, "not empty did he create it—לא־תהו בראה;" "he formed it to be inhabited," or more literally, "for a habitation he formed it." As to the other word, בהו, it only occurs three times, Gen. i. 2; Is. xxxiv. 11; and here. As the former evidently means emptiness, this may be taken to mean confusion or chaos, according to *Symmachus*, "συγχυμένη—confused." Then the right rendering here would be,—

23. I looked on the land,
And behold emptiness and confusion;
And towards the heavens,
And *they were* without their light.

It is not the earth, but the land of Judea is what is meant. The whole passage being so striking, shall be here given,—

24. I looked at the mountains,
And, behold, they were shaking,
And all the hills made quick motions:
25. I looked, and, behold, there was no man;
And every bird of heaven had fled away:
26. I looked, and, behold, Carmel a desert;
And all its cities had been demolished

he had said, that the order, which had been so beautifully arranged, had now disappeared through God's wrath, and that there was nothing but confusion everywhere. Thus he amplifies the atrocity of their sins; as though he had said, that men had become so fallen, that they had changed the whole form of the world, and blended heaven and earth together, so that now there was no distinction between things. As to the heavens, he says, that there was *no light* in them: he intimates that the light of the sun, moon, and stars, was in a manner extinguished, because men were unworthy to enjoy such a kindness from God; and as though the sun and moon were ashamed to be witnesses of so many sins and vices.

We now then apprehend what Jeremiah chiefly means in the first verse: He says, that he *looked on the earth*, and that nothing appeared in it but dreadful chaos and waste, there being no form nor beauty; for the Jews had by their sins subverted the order of nature and the creation of God. And he says, that he *looked on the heavens*, and that they had *no light;* for the Jews had deserved to be deprived of that benefit which God had designed the sun and the moon to convey: and it is indeed a singular instance of God's kindness, that he has made such noble objects to be of such service to us. The Prophet, in short, means that such awful tokens of God's wrath appeared in heaven and on earth, as though the whole world had been thrown into confusion. This mode of speaking often occurs in the other prophets, especially in Joel ii. 2. Though the words are hyperbolical, yet they do not exceed what is suitable, if we take to the account the extreme insensibility of men: for except God arms heaven and earth, and shews himself ready to take away all the blessings with which he favours mankind, they will, as we have lately said, laugh to scorn all his threatenings.

Jeremiah descends afterwards from heaven to mountains, and says that they *trembled*, and that *all the hills moved* or shook; some say, destroyed, but I know not for what reason,

By the presence of Jehovah,
By the indignation of his wrath.

The whole is represented as already done. The Prophet speaks of what he had seen in the vision.—*Ed.*

for the Prophet no doubt confirms the same thing by another phrase: and as he had said, that mountains trembled, so he also adds, that hills shook; and this is the proper meaning of the verb. Now the reason why he speaks of mountains and hills is evident; for a greater stability seems to belong to them than to level grounds, inasmuch as mountains are for the most part stony, and have their roots most firmly fixed in rocks. Were indeed the whole world to be thrown into confusion, the mountains seem to be so firmly based that no commotion could affect them: but the Prophet says, that they *trembled*, and that the hills *shook*.

What he saw the third time was solitude; for he says that there were *no men*, and that all *birds* had fled away. The principal ornament of the world, we know, consists of men and of living creatures. For why was the earth made so productive, that it brings forth fruits, so many and so various, except for the sake of men and of animals? Though, then, the earth appears very beautiful on account of its trees, herbs, and every kind of fruit, yet its principal ornaments are men and animals. By stating a part for the whole, the Prophet, by mentioning birds, includes all earthly animals: he says then, that the earth was emptied of its inhabitants.

What he saw the fourth time was this—that the *fertile land* was turned into a *desert*. I indeed think that Carmel is to be taken here as meaning the place. That part of the holy land, we know, received its name from its fertility: Carmel means any rich and fruitful spot of ground. But, as I have just said, the mount was so called because it abounded in all kinds of produce; for there were on it fruitful pastures and fertile fields, and every part of it was remarkably pleasant and delightful. I am therefore inclined to consider Carmel itself to be meant here; and my reason is, because he immediately adds, that its *cities* were *destroyed;* and this can be more fitly applied to Carmel than generally to all fruitful regions. As to myself, I think that the Prophet speaks of Carmel; and yet he alludes to what the word means.[1] Even in this verse he mentions a part for the whole,

[1] All the early versions, as well as the *Targum*, retain the word "Carmel." *Blayney* renders it "the fruitful field."—*Ed.*

as though he had said, that Carmel, which excelled in fertility, had become like a desert. When Isaiah speaks of the renovation of the Church, he says, "The desert shall be as Carmel," (Isaiah xxxii. 15,) as though he had said, that the blessing of God would be so abundant through the whole world, that deserts would bear fruit like Carmel, or those regions which are remarkable for their fertility. But Jeremiah, speaking here of a curse, says, that *Carmel* would be like the *desert;* and that all its *cities* would be demolished, even *at the presence of Jehovah, and by the great heat of his wrath.*

Some render חרון, *charun*, fury: and this kind of language is not without its use; for men, as we have said, except God terrifies them as it were by thunders, will sleep and will not perceive his judgment, so that all threatenings become useless to them. This is the reason why Scripture speaks so often of the fury or of the great heat of God's wrath. Either of the two words might indeed be sufficient; either חרון, *charun*, which means fury or great heat; or אף *aph*, which signifies anger or wrath. Why then are both mentioned? because it is necessary, as I have said, to tear in pieces our hardness as with hammers; for otherwise God could never turn us to fear him. This repetition then ought to avail for the purpose of subduing the perverseness of our nature; not that these turbulent feelings belong to God, as it is well known; but as we cannot otherwise conceive how dreadful his vengeance is, it is necessary that he should be set before us as one who is angry and burning with wrath: in a like manner, eternal death is described to us under the metaphor of fire.

Now, as to the sum of what is here said, the Jews at that time no doubt enjoyed great abundance and indulged their pleasures; in short, they were fully pleased with their condition. But the Prophet here declares that he saw at a distance what these blind Jews did not see, even God's vengeance approaching, which would deprive them of that abundance, on account of which they were so swollen with pride, and which would reduce them all into such a state of desolation that nothing would remain above or below, but a dis-

ordered confusion, such as existed before nature was brought to order, when the earth was not separated from the heavens, and there was only a confused mass, including all the elements, and without any light. He afterwards adds—

27. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

27. Quia sic dicit Jehova, Desolata erit (vasta, perdita erit) tota terra; et finem (*vel*, consumptionem) non faciam (*atque tunc copula resolvetur in adversativam*, non tamen consumptionem faciam.)

The Prophet briefly explains here what he understood by the four things which he had seen and of which he had spoken. He then declares, as it were in the person of God, that there would be a dreadful desolation throughout Judea; *Wasted*, he says, *shall be the whole land*, or, in the whole land there shall be desolation. Some explain what afterwards follows, as though he mitigated the severity of his language. Hence, as they think, a mitigation is added, which was to relieve the faithful with some hope of mercy, lest they should wholly despond. And indeed were he to threaten only he might fill a hundred worlds with terror. Lest then despair should so overwhelm the faithful as to restrain them from fleeing to God for mercy, it is often added by way of mitigation, that God would not consume the whole land.

The word כלה, *cale*, sometimes means perfection, but in most places, consummation; for the verb signifies to perfect and to consume, and for the same reason. Though these two things seem inconsistent, yet what is consumed is said to be perfected, for it comes to an end. If this explanation is approved, we now see the reason why he declares that he would not make a consummation, with whatever severity he might punish the sins of his people; it was, that some hope might remain for the faithful, so that they might not be wholly discouraged; which would have been the case had not God promised to be propitious and mindful of his covenant.

Some perhaps may approve of reading the sentence as a question, and think that the object is to beat down the pride of the ungodly, and to dissipate the boasting of those who relied on the hope of impunity; as though he had said, "Do ye still deny that I shall make a consummation?"

Now, though the former exposition contains a riche[r] truth,

yet I prefer to take כלה, *cale*, as signifying an end, as though he had declared that he would observe no moderation in executing his vengeance:[1] and a similar language occurs in the next chapter. The real meaning then is,—that God would to the end carry on his work of desolation. The prophets indeed do not always speak alike when they announce God's judgments. Sometimes they denounce ruin where none seems to be safe; yet God ever preserves some hidden seed, as it is said in Isaiah i. 9; where also it appears evident what the prophets understood by making a consummation. For God there threatens and says, "Behold I will make a consummation;" yet he afterwards adds, "The consummation shall bring forth fruit," that is, what remained of the consummation. The prophets elsewhere compare the Church of God to olive-trees when shaken, or to vines after vintage, (Isaiah xvii. 6; xxiv. 13;) for some grapes ever remain which escape the eyes of the gatherers; so also, when the olive-trees are shaken, some fruit remain on the highest branches. Thus God says, that the consummation he makes in his Church is like the vintage or the shaking of olive-trees, when some fruit remain and escape the eyes of the gatherers. We now perceive what the Prophet means,—that there would be the ruin of the whole people, so that they would have neither a name nor existence as a body; which thing also happened, when they were driven as exiles into Babylon; for the people, as a civil community, then ceased to exist, so that there was an end made of them.

I indeed allow that God's threatenings cannot avail for our salvation, unless connected with the promise of pardon, so that being raised up by the hope of salvation we may flee

[1] All the early versions and the *Targum* favour the former view, as they all render the sentence, "Yet a consummation I will not make." *Gataker* mentions another explanation, "I will not yet make a full end" with you; that is, I will punish you yet farther: and reference is made to chap. v. 18. This view is adopted by *Blayney* and *Scott*. But the former view is no doubt the right one; for this is the meaning of the phrase as found in other places; see chap. xxx. 11; where it is clear that כלה עשה is wholly to destroy. See also Neh. ix. 31; Ezek. xi. 13; xx. 17; Nahum i. 9. The meaning then is, "Yet I will not make an entire destruction." *Henry* takes this view, and *Lowth* seems to prefer it. Indeed the phrase has no other meaning wherever it is used.—*Ed.*

to him: for as long as we deem God inexorable, we shun every access to him; and thus despair drives us into a rage like that of fiends. Hence it is that the reprobate rage so much against God, and make a great clamour: and they would willingly thrust him from his throne. It is therefore necessary that a hope of salvation should be set before us, so that we may be touched with repentance: and as this promise is perpetual, whatever may happen, even if earth and heaven were mixed together, and ruin on every side were filling us with dread, we must still remember that there will be ever some remnant according to the passages we have referred to in the first and tenth chapters of Isaiah. But as the people were not prepared to receive consolation, the design of the Prophet here is different, for he only mentions punishment. He afterwards adds—

28. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken *it*, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

28. Super hoc lugebit terra, et nigrescent (*vel*, caligine *aut* nigredine obducti erunt) cœli desursum (*nescio tamen an posset verti*, à transgressione; *nam* מעל *significat etiam* transgredi et inquietare;) quia loquutus sum; cogitavi et non pœnituit, et non convertar ab hoc.

Jeremiah proceeds here with the same subject, and still introduces God as the speaker, that what is said might produce a greater effect. *For this*, he says, *the land shall mourn*. The mourning of the land is to be taken for its desolation; but he refers to what he had said before. He does not speak of the inhabitants of the land; for they who thus explain the passage, diminish much the force of the expression; for the Prophet here ascribes terror and sorrow to the very elements, which is much more striking than if he said, that all men would be in sorrow and grief. The same also must be thought of the heavens. Indeed, the latter clause proves that he does not speak of the inhabitants, but of the land itself, which, though without reason, seems yet to dread God's vengeance. And thus the Prophet upbraids men with their insensibility; for when God appeared as judge from heaven, they were not touched with any fear. *Mourn* then *shall the land, and covered shall be the heaven with darkness;* that is, though men remain stupid, yet both heaven and earth shall feel how dreadful God's judgment will be.

He afterwards adds, *Because I have spoken.* Some consider אשר, *asher*, what, to be understood between this sentence and the following verb: "Because I have spoken what I have purposed, and I have not repented." But the concise phrase is not unsuitable: God first intimates, that he had pronounced the sentence, which would remain firm and unchangeable; as though he had said, "I have once for all declared by my servants what I will do." For the prophets, we know, were the heralds of God's vengeance: and as their doctrine was often despised, so at this day also the world obstinately rejects it; and as it often now derides all threatenings, so it happened then. But Jeremiah introduces here God as the speaker, as though he had said, "My servants have been despised by you; but they have said nothing but what I have commanded them: I am therefore the author of that sentence by which you ought to have been moved and roused." In this sense it is that God testifies that he had spoken; for he transfers to himself what the Jews thought proceeded from the prophets, and hence supposed that they were at liberty to regard as nothing what the prophets pronounced against them: "I myself am He," says God, "who has spoken." So that we must understand a contrast here between God and the prophets; as though he had said, that the Jews in vain slumbered in their sins, because they thought they had to do only with mortals, since God himself had commanded his servants to denounce the ruin that was despised.

But that they might not think that God had thus spoken to cause a false alarm, (for hypocrites flatter themselves with this pretence, that God does not speak seriously, but that he frightens them with bugbears, as children are wont to be,) he says, that he had *purposed.* He had said before that he had spoken, that is, by his prophets; but what he means now by this word is, that the predictions which he had made known as to their destruction proceeded from his own secret counsel: "This," he says, "has been decreed by me."

He then adds, *It has not repented me, and I will not turn from it.* He briefly shews, that the Jews were now given up to death, that they might not think that God could be paci-

fied as long as they followed their vices; for God had decreed to destroy them; and he had not only declared this by his prophets, but had also resolved within himself to do so. By the term repent, is to be understood a change; for God cannot, strictly speaking, repent, as nothing is hid from him; but he speaks, as I have lately stated, after a human manner: and every ambiguity is removed by the next phrase, when he says, *I will not turn from it*, that is, "I will not retract my sentence."[1] It follows—

29. The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city *shall be* forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.

29. A voce equitis et jaculantis arcu fugiet omnis civitas; penetrabunt (*vel*, ingredientur) in densitates (*alii*, in nubes; עבים *significat densitates, ut sunt loca arboribus perplexa, significat etiam nubes; potius hic existimo accipi pro nubibus, quia sequitur,*) ascendent in rupes (*postea :*) omnis civitas relicta erit, et nullus vir habitabit in illis.

By saying, that at the *voice* or sound of *horsemen and bowmen* there would be an universal flight, he means, that the enemies would come with such impetuosity, that the Jews would not dare to wait for their presence, but would flee here and there before they were attacked: for the word *voice* or sound, no doubt, is set here in opposition to wounds. They did swell, we know, with amazing pride; hence the Prophet ridicules that false confidence by which they were so inebriated as not to dread God's judgment: "The sound alone of enemies," he says, "will frighten you; so that all the cities, being left by their inhabitants, will easily fall into their hands, for walls will not defend themselves; nay, the gates will be open." *Flee* then *will every city;* that is, all

[1] The latter part is very concise,—

Because I have said,
——— I have purposed,
And have not repented,
And I will not turn from it.

The turning refers to what he had said, and repentance to the purpose. *Blayney* followed the *Septuagint*, and changed the order of the words, and thus destroyed the right connection of the passage, and the common parallelism of the language. We may also notice this passage as an instance of what is often found both in the Old Testament, and also in the New,—that when two or more things are consecutively stated, the most obvious, the most apparent, is mentioned first, and then the most hidden, or what is in order previous. Purpose is first in order, but speaking is first mentioned.—*Ed.*

the cities will have recourse to flight. Then it follows, *Ascend will they into the clouds,* or into thicknesses: this may be applied to the enemies, to shew that they would be so nimble and active as to fly, as it were, to the clouds, and climb the highest rocks. But I prefer to connect this sentence with the former, as intimating, that to ascend the clouds would not be too arduous for the Jews in their anxious flight. Inasmuch as the tops of mountains were often covered with thick trees, in order to form a dark shade, this passage may mean, that they fled to such places. However this may have been, the Prophet here, no doubt, refers to such high situations. Hence, the meaning would be more evident if we retain the word, clouds. As to what is intended, we see that that is clear; which is, that the enemies of the Jews would in swiftness be equal to the eagles while pursuing them; or, what is more commonly thought, that the terror felt by the Jews would be so great, that in their flight they would not seek recesses nigh at hand, but would flee to the highest tops of mountains, and hide themselves there among the trees, as though they had climbed into the clouds. They would *ascend into craggy rocks,* as they could not think themselves otherwise safe from the attacks of their enemies.[1]

He then adds, that *every city* would be *forsaken,* so that *no one* would *dwell in them.* We see that the Prophet had ever this in view—to rouse the Jews, who had deaf ears and stony hearts, so that they felt no concern for their own calamities, and even boldly despised God, as though they had made a covenant with death, according to what is said in another place. (Is. xxviii. 15.) He afterwards subjoins—

[1] The verbs in this are all in the past tense, as in some former instances. The Prophet had already seen in a vision what he here states,—

At the voice (or sound) of the rider and of the handler of the bow,
Flee did every city;
They went into thickets, and into cliffs they climbed;
Every city was forsaken,
And dwell in them did no man.

The word for "thickets" means sometimes "clouds." The verb signifies to be dense, thick, gross, bulky: but the plural noun means a thick wood, as well as a thick or dense mass of vapours, which form clouds. It is rendered "ἄλση—forests," by the *Septuagint* and *Syriac;* and "sylvas—woods," by the *Targum.—Ed.*

30. And *when* thou *art* spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; *thy* lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

30. Et tu perdita (*aut*, vastata) quid facies? Quamvis te induas coccino, quamvis te ornes ornamentis auri (*vel*, monilibus aureis, *ut alii vertunt*,) quamvis distinguas fuco (*aut*, stybio, *ut alii vertunt*,) oculos tuos, frustra te decorabis (*ad verbum*, pulchrificabis;) abominabuntur te amatores tui, animam tuam quærent.

The Prophet boldly ridicules the Jews, in order to cast down their pride and haughtiness. It was indeed his object to check that pride with which they were elated against God. The Prophet could not have done this without assuming a higher strain than usual, and by rendering his discourse more striking by using metaphorical words. It is indeed the language of derision; he exclaims, *What wilt thou do, thou wretched one?* The Jews had hitherto been inflated with contempt towards God, and their high spirits had not been subdued. Since, then, their haughtiness continued untamed, the Prophet cries out and says, "Thou wretched, what wilt thou do?" as though he had said, "In vain do they flatter themselves and promise themselves aid from this and from that quarter, for their condition is past any remedy."[1]

He afterwards adds, *Though*, &c.; for so I consider the connection of the verse; and they seem right to me who do not separate the words of the Prophet. But the view which others take appears frigid, "Who now adornest thyself, who now clothest thyself in scarlet, who adornest thyself with ornaments of gold, who paintest thy eyes black." To no purpose do they introduce the relative, for it renders the meaning of the Prophet different from what it really is.

[1] The words "thou wretched," or, more commonly, "thou spoiled," are left out in the *Septuagint* and *Arabic*, and are retained in this sense by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and the *Targum*. But, as *Blayney* justly says, it is a rendering that is not correct. "Thou," as in the received text, is feminine, and "spoiled" is masculine. The *Keri* and many MSS. have את instead of אתי; and שדוד, as *Blayney* supposes, is not a passive participle, but a verb in the infinitive mood, used as a noun. So he gives this version,—

And against spoiling what wilt thou do?

The word "spoiled," or wasted, may indeed refer to "every city," mentioned in the former verse, and the word for city is masculine. We may then render thus,—

And the *city* being wasted, what wilt thou do?

"The *city*" may be deemed as the poetical singular for the plural.—*Ed.*

These parts follow one another, and the principal verb is found in these words, *In vain dost thou adorn thyself;* and the particle כִּי is to be rendered "though."

There are those who consider ceremonies to be intended, as hypocrites think that they are by these protected against God's judgment: but this view is unsuitable and wholly alien to what is here set forth. It is indeed true, that ceremonies are to hypocrites dens of thieves, as we shall hereafter see, (ch. vii. 11;) but the Prophet in this place refers to meretricious ornaments; for the people, as it had before appeared, were become like an adulterous woman. God had formed with them as it were a marriage-contract; they had violated it; and this perfidy was like the defection of an adulteress, who leaves her husband and wanders here and there, and lives as a prostitute. As then harlots, for the purpose of enticement, are wont to dress themselves elegantly, to paint their faces, and to use other allurements, the Prophet says, "In vain wilt thou adorn thyself; though thou puttest on scarlet, though thou shinest with gold even from the head to the feet, yet all this will be superfluous and useless; and though, in addition to all this, thou paintest thy face,[1] it will yet avail thee nothing."

Now, we know whom he understands by lovers, even the Egyptians and the Assyrians. For the Jews, when oppressed by the Egyptians, were wont to seek help from the Assyrians; and again, when attacked by the Assyrians, they became suppliants to the Egyptians. The prophets compared this sort of conduct to that of strumpets; for whenever they courted the aid of either of these parties, they broke the bond of marriage, by which they were connected with God, and perfidiously violated their pledged faith. Hence, the Prophet says, "Even if the Egyptians promise wonderful

[1] The *Septuagint*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Targum* give this rendering,—
"Though thou paintest with stibium thine eyes."
The Hebrew literally is, as it is rendered by *Blayney*,—
Though thou distendest with paint thy eyes.
The verb קרע, means first to rend, to divide, and then to divide in the sense of distending or enlarging. Large eyes were considered a beauty, and women used a sort of paint, or rather powder, for the purpose of enlarging them. See *Lowth's* note on Is. iii. 16, and *Parkhurst* under the word פּוּךְ.—*Ed.*

things to thee, as a lover allured by thy beauty and by thy meretricious ornaments, yet they will deceive thee; and if the Assyrians shew themselves ready to bring aid, they also will disappoint thy hope: so that thou shalt be like a destitute strumpet, reduced to extreme want." I cannot finish to-day: I must therefore defer the rest until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that though we are torpid in our vices, we may yet be attentive to these examples of thy wrath, by which thou designest to warn us, so that we may learn by the misery of others to fear thee: and may we be also attentive to those threatenings, by which thou drawest us to thee, as thou failest to allure us by thy kindness: and may we, in the meantime, feel assured that thou wilt ever be propitious and merciful to all miserable sinners, who will from the heart seek thee and sincerely and unfeignedly repent; so that we may contend with our vices, and with real effort strive to deliver ourselves from those snares of Satan which he ever spreads for us, in order that we may more freely devote ourselves altogether to thee, and take such delight in thy righteousness, that our object and aim through the whole course of our life may be to please thee, and to render our services approved in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Eighteenth.

We stated, yesterday, what the Prophet meant by the *scarlet* clothing, by the *golden* ornaments, and by the *painting*, which he mentions, even those delusive crafts, which the princes and the people employed in forming confederacies; for they ever acted perfidiously. But it was also said, that the Prophet refers to the spiritual marriage which God had formed with the people of Israel; for a kind of adultery was committed, when they sought foreign alliances; as they thus denied God, being not satisfied with his protection. As a wife considers herself sufficiently protected by her husband, so the Israelites ought to have depended on God only: but inasmuch as they ran here and there, following their own vagrant desires, the Prophet justly compares them to adulterous women.

But he says, that they would be an abomination to their *lovers*; and not only so, but that both the Egyptians and the Assyrians, in whom they foolishly trusted, would be their worst enemies: *Hate thee*, he says, *shall thy lovers*;[1] *yea, they will seek thy life;* that is, those aids, by which thou thinkest to become safe and secure, will be for thy destruction. It then follows—

31. For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, *and* the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, *that* bewaileth herself, *that* spreadeth her hands, *saying*, Woe *is* me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

31. Certè vocem parturientis audivi, afflictionem (*vel*, anxietatem) quasi puerperæ (*vel*, parientis primogenitum; *nam propriè hoc significat nomen*) vocem filiæ Sion; lugebit (*vel*, conqueretur, *vel*, ingemiscet,) scindet (*vel*, extendet, *ut alii vertunt, vel*, confliget) manus suas: Væ nunc mihi, quia defecit anima mea propter interfectos (*alii activè*, propter interfectores.)

By these words Jeremiah confirms what the latter part of the preceding verse contains: nor was it for the sake of elucidating his subject that he enlarged on it; but when he saw his own nation so hard and almost like stones, he employed many words and set forth in various ways what he might have expressed in one sentence: and what he taught would have been often coldly received, had he not added exhortations and threatenings. It was on this account that he now expresses in other words what he had previously said, *I have heard*, he says, *the voice as of one in labour.* This hearing, no doubt, is to be taken consistently with the representation which had been made to him; for Jeremiah could not hear in a way different from others; but he speaks according to the discovery made to him of the approaching judgment of God, which was then unheeded by the people; and he had this discovery, that he might by such a representation as this make it known to them. He then says, that he had *heard*, as though he had witnessed already all that was to come. He then exaggerates the evil; for he puts *distress*, צָרָה, *tsere*, instead of "voice," קוֹל, *kul;* and

[1] Rather,—

Rejected thee have paramours.

This is the meaning of the verb when followed as here by ב. See note on chap. ii. 37. The word for paramours means not lovers, but lewd or mad lovers. The verb is rendered "to dote upon," Ezek. xxiii. 12.—*Ed.*

then he mentions, as an instance of greater pain, a woman bringing forth her first-born, instead of a woman in labour. Then Jeremiah means, that final ruin was nigh that people who could not then be restored from their sinful courses; but he intimates, as also the Spirit speaks in other places, that their destruction would be sudden; while they would be saying, Peace and security, sudden destruction would come upon them. (1 Thess. v. 3.) And so the Prophet now declares, that the Jews in vain hardened themselves against God, as though their ruin was not approaching, for their sorrow would come suddenly. As a woman may be cheerful at meat or at her leisure, and may be suddenly seized with the pain of labour, so also the Prophet shews, that the Jews had no reason to think that they could escape God's vengeance by a false confidence, for their destruction would come upon them unexpectedly.

He sets forth at the same time, as already said, the greatness or the extremity of their grief by this similitude, *The voice of the daughter of Sion, who complains*, &c.; for the relative may be here added. Some take the verb to be in the second person, "Thou wilt lament and extend," or rend, "thy hands;" but this is not suitable, because the third person is immediately used, "thy hands." Then what he says is, that the *voice of the daughter of Sion* would be an evidence of her extreme grief, for she would lament; and he adds, at the same time, the smiting of the hands. This verb is variously rendered; but as פָּרַשׂ, *peresh*, means properly to rend or to divide, I think the Prophet expresses the posture of a woman in grief; for she usually smites her hands together, and as it were divides them by putting the fingers between one another. Some render the word "expand," for the hands are divided when raised up. As to what is meant, there is nothing ambiguous in the Prophet's words; for his object is to shew, that God's vengeance would be so dreadful, that the Jews would lament, not in an ordinary measure, but like women, when in the extreme pain of labour.

He then concludes by saying, *Woe to me*, for *failed has my soul on account of murderers*. Here the Prophet inti-

mates, that all the rest were blind in the midst of light, yet God's judgment, which the ungodly and wicked laughed at, or at least disregarded, was seen clearly by him. *His soul*, he says, *fainted for the slain;* and yet no one had hitherto been slain: but by this mode of speaking, he shews, that he had as it were before his eyes what was hid from others, and hence their hearts were not affected.[1] Now follows—

CHAPTER V.

1. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.

1. Circuite per vias (*alii vertunt*, inquirite, *vel*, explorate, *vel*, investigate per vias) Jerusalem, et videte, agedum, (*hic enim* נָא *est hortantis, proximo versu debuit verti*, nunc, væ nunc mihi,) et cognoscite, et inquirite, in vicis ejus (in compitis ejus,) an invenietis virum, an erit qui faciat judicium (*hoc est*, rectitudinem,) qui quærat veritatem, et parcam illi.

In this verse, as in those which follow, God shews that he was not too rigid or too severe in denouncing utter ruin on his people, because their wickedness was wholly incurable, and no other mode of treating them could be found. We, indeed, know that it is often testified in Scripture, that God is patient and waits until sinners repent. Since then God everywhere extols his kindness, and promises to be merciful even to the worst if they repent, and since he of his own accord anticipates sinners, it may appear strange that he rises with so much severity against his own Church. But

[1] This latter part is differently taken by most. It is considered to be the confession of the daughter of Sion. The whole verse is remarkably striking,—

> For the voice as of one in travail have I heard,
> The distress as of one giving birth to a first-born,
> The voice of the daughter of Sion;
> *Who* pants for breath, *who* spreads her hands,—
> "Wo now to me,
> For melted has my soul because of murderers."

It is a common thing in Hebrew to omit the relative "who," before a verb in a future tense, especially when it means the present time. The scene is described as present. The passage might be expressed in *Welsh* without the relative. "*Who* pants for breath," is rendered by *Horsley*, "that draweth her breath short;" and he adds, "The passage is a most affecting picture of the last struggles of a woman expiring in labour."—*Ed.*

we know how refractory the ungodly are; and hence they hesitate not to expostulate with God, and wilfully accuse him, as though he treated them with cruelty. It is then for this reason, that God now shews that he was not, as it were, at liberty to forgive the people; "Even if I would," he says, "I could not." He speaks, indeed, after the mnaner of men; but in this way, as I have said, he shews that he tried all expedients, before he had recourse to extreme severity, but that there was no remedy, on account of the desperate wickedness of the people. And this is what the words fully express.

Go round,[1] he says, *through the streets of Jerusalem, and see, I pray, and know; inquire through all the cross-ways.* Jeremiah might have said in one sentence, "If one man be found in the city, I am ready to forgive:" but God here permits the whole world to inquire diligently and carefully what was the state of the holy city, which ever gloried in that title. But he now, as also in the next verse, speaks of Jerusalem. He had spoken also of the neighbouring cities; but as the holiness of the whole land seemed then to have its seat and habitation at Jerusalem, God here addresses that city, which as yet retained some appearance of sanctity, and excelled other cities. He then says, *Inquire, see, know, look, whether there is a man,* &c. He allows here all men

[1] Our version is, "Run ye to and fro," which has been taken from the *Septuagint*—περιδράμετε; but this is a more correct rendering. The *Vulgate* is "circuite—go round;" the *Syriac* is the same. "Streets" were the narrow ones, the lanes; and what *Calvin* renders "the cross-ways," and our version "broad places," were the wide streets, or the squares. In the former the poor people lived, and in the latter the great people, the chief men of the city. The examination was to extend to all the inhabitants. First, it takes place as to the poor in the lanes, and afterwards among the higher orders in the wide streets. The whole verse might be thus rendered,—

1. Go ye round through the narrow streets of Jerusalem,
   And see, I pray, and know;
   Yea, seek in the broad streets;
   If ye can find a man, if there be *any*,
   Who doeth justice, who seeks faithfulness,
   Then will I spare it.

The ו after בְּ may be often rendered "Then;" and this passage requires it to be so rendered. "That I may pardon her" is *Blayney's* version; but this hardly corresponds with the former part; "If," and "that," form no connection.—*Ed.*

to form a judgment, as though he had said, "Let all be present, since the Jews seek to create an ill-will towards me, and complain of too much rigour, as though I treated them unhumanly; let all who wish come as judges, let them inquire, ask, make a thorough search; and when it shall be found out that there is not in it even one just man, what else can be done, but that the city must be destroyed? for what can be done to the abandoned and irreclaimable, except I execute my judgment on them?"

We now understand the Prophet's object; for he intended here to shut the mouths of the Jews, and to expose their slanders, that they might not clamour against God or blame his judgment, as though it exceeded the limits of moderation: and he shews also, that though God was disposed to pardon, there was yet no place for pardon, and that his mercy was excluded by their untameable obstinacy, since there was not one man in Jerusalem who had any regard for uprightness.

Here, however, a question may be started, Why does Jeremiah say that no good man could be found, since he himself was at Jerusalem, and his friend Baruch, and some others, an account of whom we shall hereafter find? There were then in the city some true servants of God, and some as yet remained who had true religion, though the number was small. It appears then that the language is hyperbolical.

But we must observe, that the Prophet here speaks of the people to the exclusion of the faithful. That this may appear more evident, we must remember a passage in the eighth chapter of Isaiah, "Seal the law and bind the testimony for my disciples," (Is. viii. 16;) where it appears that God saw that he sent his Prophet in vain, and that his labours were spent in vain among a people wholly irreclaimable. Hence he says, "Bind the testimony and seal the law among the disciples." We see that God gathered as it were together the few in whom remained any seed of true religion, yea, in whose hearts any religion was found. They were not then numbered with the people. So now Jeremiah did not consider Baruch and a few others as forming a part of that reprobate people; and he speaks, as it has been stated, of the community in general; for there were some separated from

the rest, not only by the secret counsel of God, but according to the judgment that had been pronounced. He hence truly declares, that there was not one just man.

We ought also to consider with whom he was then contending. On the one side were the king and his counsellors, who, inflated with the promises, which they perverted, did not think it possible that the throne of David would fall. "This is my rest for ever—As long as the sun and moon shall be, they shall be my witnesses in heaven, that thy seed shall never fail." (Ps. cxxxii. 14; lxxxix. 37, 38.) With such words were they armed. But as hypocrites falsely claim God's promises, so these unprincipled men boasted that God was on their side. Jeremiah had also to fight with another party, as we shall hereafter see, that is, with a host of false prophets; for there was a greater number of them, as is ever to be found in the world. The whole priestly order was corrupt, and openly carrying on war with God; and the people were nothing better. Jeremiah then had to contend with the king and his counsellors, with the false prophets, with the ungodly priests, and with the wicked people. So he says, that there was *not one man* among them who engaged himself in appeasing God's wrath.

To *seek judgment* is the same thing as to labour for uprightness: for the word מִשְׁפָּט, *meshephet*, means rectitude, or equity, or the rule of acting justly. He says then, that there was no one who practised what was just; that there was no one who sought *the truth*. Truth, as in a verse that follows, is to be taken for integrity, honesty; as though he had said, that all were given to falsehoods and frauds and crafts. It was therefore impossible that God should have been propitious to the city; for the relative הּ after לָ, being of the feminine gender, cannot be otherwise applied than to Jerusalem. God then says, that he would be merciful to it, if there could be found a just man among the king's counsellors, or among the priests, or among the prophets: but they had all united together in opposition to everything just and right. It follows—

2. And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely.

2. Etsi, vivit Jehova, dixerint, ob id in vanum (*vel*, fallaciter) jurabunt.

This is added by way of anticipation; for the Jews, as it is well known, thought that they had a cover for all their vices, inasmuch as they had God's name continually in their mouths. Since then they professed to worship the God of Abraham, they thought that this pretext was sufficient to cover all their wickedness. The Prophet obviates this objection, and shews that this disguise was of no avail, because in thus using God's name, they profaned it: and he goes still further; for he shews that the Jews, not only in common practice, were wholly destitute of the fear of God, but that when anything of a religious kind appeared among them, it was sacrilegious; and this is far worse than when God's name is forgotten, and wretched men allow themselves a full license in sinning, as though they could not conceal their wickedness: for when they openly provoke God, and as it were dishonour him to his face, how detestable and how monstrous is their impiety! This then is what Jeremiah sets forth, *Though they say, Live does Jehovah, yet in this they swear falsely.*

We now perceive the Prophet's meaning: In the first place, he takes away from hypocrites their vain confidence in thinking that God would be propitious to them, provided they avowed his name, without considering how precious God's name is, but regarding it as nothing to swear carelessly by his name: but the Prophet not only condemns the hypocrisy of the Jews, but, as I have said, he enhances their wickedness; for they hesitated not to profane God's sacred name, and to carry on, as it were, an open war with him, by abusing his name in swearing.

By mentioning, *Live does Jehovah*, he refers to the words which the godly also use when they make an oath; for when they appeal to the living God, it is the same thing as though they stood before his tribunal; and at the same time said, that they knew that though God may defer his vengeance, yet an account must be given, because he ever lives. Thus the godly acknowledge that there is nothing gained by delay, in case God suspends his vengeance, if they swear falsely. But the Prophet, as I have already said, applies this to hypocrites, who seemed to ascribe great honour to

God, for nothing is more specious than their words: gall indeed was in their heart, while honey was on their lips. Hence the Prophet derides this false pretence, and says, "Even when they swear most solemnly as to the words used, and shew a high concern for religion, nevertheless they swear falsely." Some render לָכֵן, *lacen*, surely, or certainly; but the meaning will be plainer, if we render it "nevertheless."[1] It follows—

3. O Lord, *are* not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, *but* they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

3. Jehova, oculi tui annon ad veritatem? Percussisti eos, et non doluerunt; consumpsisti eos, et renuerunt suscipere disciplinam (*vel*, correctionem;) obduraverunt facies suas magis quàm petram (*vel*, lapidem, magis quàm saxum:) renuerunt converti (*vel*, redire.)

Some give a strained exposition of the beginning of the verse, or rather pervert it, as though the Prophet had said, that God would not turn his eyes from what was right, because he would rigidly execute his vengeance on his people. But Jeremiah goes on here with the same subject, for there is no importance to be attached to the division of the verses. They who have divided them have often unknowingly perverted the meaning. The divisions then are not to be heeded, only the number is to be retained as a help to the memory; but as to the context, they often are a hinderance to readers; for it is preposterous to blend things which are separate, and to divide what is connected. This remark has just now occurred to me, and it is necessary, as this place calls for it; for the Prophet, after having said that the Jews were perfi-

[1] There are many MSS. which have אֲכֵן, "surely," but לָכֵן may also be so rendered; yet, as "nevertheless" is its meaning, in chap. xvi. 14, and other places, it may be so taken here. The *Septuagint* must have read לֹא כֵן, and the sentence is a question, "Do they not thus swear falsely?" But the early versions favour the present reading; and it gives a suitable meaning,—

And though "Live does Jehovah," they say,
Nevertheless falsely do they swear.

The verbs are in the future tense, but used to express present acts, as is the case often in Hebrew, and also very commonly in *Welsh*. The words in the latter language might be expressed exactly as in the former, and be understood as speaking of what is present,—

Ac er "Byw yw Jehova" a ddywedant,
Etto yn gelwyddog y tyngant.—*Ed.*

dious and guilty of duplicity, and destitute of all integrity, immediately adds, But *the eyes* of God *regard fidelity;* as though he had said, that they in vain pretended to avow God's name, and made a shew of religion by ceremonies and by an outward display; for God searches the heart, and cares nothing for those external masks by which men's eyes are captivated.

The Prophet very significantly turns his discourse to God, to shew that he was wearied in addressing the people, for he saw that he prevailed nothing with the obstinate; for had there been any teachable spirit in the Jews, he would no doubt have exhorted them to practise integrity. He might have said, "They are mistaken who swear falsely in God's name, and persuade themselves that he will be their Father; for his eyes regard fidelity and uprightness of heart." This would have been a regular way of proceeding, and this mode of teaching would have been most suitable: but Jeremiah abruptly breaks off his address, and leaves his own people; "O God," he says, "thy eyes look on fidelity;" as though he had said, "What more can I have to do with this wretched people? I address words to rocks and stones: therefore I bid you adieu, and shall have no more to do with you; I will now turn to God." We now see how much more forcible and striking is this turning from the people to God, than if the Prophet continued his address to the Jews, and sought to instruct them: for he now shews that he was broken down with weariness; for he saw that his labour was useless, and that all whom he had addressed were altogether refractory: nor did he, at the same time, intend to speak these words at random, and to no purpose; nay, his object was more sharply to touch those who were stupid, by letting them know that he left off addressing them, because he had no hope respecting them.

But what I have said elsewhere ought to be borne in mind, —that the Prophets did not write all that they preached, but collected the substance of what they had delivered to the people; and this collection now forms the prophetic books. There is therefore no doubt but that Jeremiah had spoken at large on repentance,—that he had exposed the sins of hypo-

crites,—that he had denuded the fallacious pretences of the people,—and that he had severely reproved their obstinacy. But after having done all these things, he found it necessary to desist from pursuing his course, for he saw that no fruit could be hoped from his labours and his preaching. Now, when the Jews knew this, they ought to have been deeply affected; and this ought to be the case with us now, when we see that God's Spirit is provoked by our perverseness; and as this is a dreadful thing, it is what ought more than anything else to touch our hearts. Consider what it is: God daily invites us most kindly to himself; but when he sees that our hearts and heads are so extremely hard, he leaves us, because we grieve his Spirit, as it is said by Isaiah. (Is. lxiii. 10.) It was not, then, an usual or common mode of teaching which the Prophet adopted; but it was calculated to have more effect than plain instruction; for he shews that the wickedness of the people could no longer be endured.

Jehovah, he says, *thine eyes, are they not on the truth?* In this address to God there is an implied contrast between God and men. The most wicked, we know, flatter themselves while they can retain the good opinion and applause of the world; and as long as they continue in honour, they slumber in their vices. This foolish confidence is what the Prophet evidently exposes; for he intimates that the eyes of God are different from those of mortals: men can see a very little way, hardly three fingers before them; but God penetrates into the inmost and the most hidden recesses of the heart: and the Prophet speaks thus of God's eyes, in order to shew how worthless are the opinions of men, who regard only a splendid outward appearance. By *truth*, the Prophet means, as in the first verse, integrity of heart. Hence without reason do they philosophize here, who seek to prove from this passage that we are made acceptable to God by faith only; for the Prophet does not speak of the faith by which we embrace free reconciliation with God, and become members of Christ. The meaning indeed is in no way obscure, which is this—that God cares not for that external splendour by which men are captivated, according to what is said in 1 Sam. xvi. 7, "Man sees what appears outwardly; but God looks on the

heart." There the Holy Spirit expresses the same thing by "heart" as he does here by fidelity or "truth." For Samuel shews that David's father was mistaken, because he brought forward his sons who excelled in their outward appearance: "Man sees," he says, "what appears outwardly; but God looks on the heart."

We now understand the true meaning of the Prophet,—that though hypocrites flatter themselves, and the whole world encourage them by their adulations, all this will not avail them; for they must at last come before the tribunal of God, and that before God truth only will be approved and honoured.

He afterwards adds, *Thou hast smitten them, and they have not grieved.* The Prophet reproves here the hardness of the people; for they had been smitten, but they repented not. Experience, as they say, is the teacher of fools; and it is an old proverb, that fools, when corrected, become wise. Both poets and historians have uttered such sayings. Since, then, the Jews had such a perverse disposition, that even scourges did not lead them to repentance, it was an evidence of extreme wickedness. And thus the Prophet here confirms what he had said before, that God would be merciful to them, if one just man could be found in the city: he confirms that declaration when he says, "Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved." The Jews, no doubt, groaned under their scourges; yea, they howled and poured forth grievous complaints: for we know how petulantly they spoke evil of God. They then had grieved; but grief here is to be taken in a special sense, according to what Paul says of repentance, that its beginning is grief or sorrow. (2 Cor. vii. 9, 10.) In this sense it is that the Prophet says here, that they who had disturbed minds grieved not, for they did not feel that they had to do with God. He then means by this word what another Prophet means, when he says, that they did not regard the hand of him who smote them. (Is. ix. 13.) For he does not say that they were so senseless as not to feel the strokes; but that the hand of God was not seen by them; and yet this is the principal thing in our sorrow. For if we blindly and violently cry out

in our troubles, and cry, Wo, a hundred times, what is it all? our lamentations are only those of brute animals: but when we regard the hand of him who smites us, our grief then is of the right kind. Jeremiah says, that the Jews did not grieve in this manner, for they did not perceive that they were justly chastened by God's hand.

He afterwards enlarges on the subject, *Thou hast consumed them*, he says, *and they refused to receive correction.* By saying that they had been *consumed*, he proves them guilty of extreme perverseness; for when God lightly chides us, it is no great wonder if, through our tardiness and sloth, we are not immediately roused; but when God doubles his strokes, yea, when he not only smites us with his rods, but draws his sword to consume us entirely; yea, when he thus deals with us, and executes his vengeance by terrible judgments, if then we are still torpid in our sins, and feel not how dreadful it is to endure his judgments, must we not be indeed wholly blinded by the devil? This is then the stupor which the Prophet now deplores in the Jews; for not only were they without a right feeling of grief when God smote them, but when they were even consumed, they did not receive or admit correction. And in this second clause he shews what we have already said,—that the grief he speaks of is not to be taken for any sort of grief, but of that which regards God's judgment, and proves that we fear him.

He adds, *They have hardened their faces as a rock*, and lastly, *they have refused to return.* The Prophet means, that the Jews were not only refractory, but that they were also without any shame. If, indeed, they had given every evidence of being ashamed, it would have been still useless, except there was, as we have said, an integrity of heart. But it often happens, that even the worst, though inwardly full of impiety and of contempt towards God, and of perverseness, do yet retain some measure of shame. In order to shew that the Jews had arrived to extreme impiety, the Prophet says, that they had *hardened their faces*, that is, that they were wholly without shame; for they had cast away everything like reason, and made no difference be-

tween right and wrong, between honesty and baseness. As, then, they had put off every human feeling, he says that nothing remained to be done, but that God, as he had previously declared, should execute on them extreme vengeance. And he repeats what he had said,—that they *refused to turn.* He means, that they sinned and went astray, not through mistake or want of knowledge, but that they disregarded their own safety through wilful and deliberate wickedness, and that they knowingly and avowedly rejected God, so that they would not endure either his teaching or his corrections.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as the devil ceases not to soothe us by his allurements, so that we may become torpid and stupified,—O grant, that thy word may so shine in our minds and hearts that we may not grow torpid in darkness; and do thou also so rouse us by thy Spirit, that we may attend to those warnings of

[1] The literal rendering of this verse is as follows,—
Jehovah! thine eyes, are *they* not on faithfulness?
Smitten them hast thou, but they have not grieved;
Thou hast consumed them,—they have refused to receive correction;
Harder have they made their faces than a rock;
They have refused to return.

The "truth" here, and in the first verse, is regarded by *Calvin* and most commentators, as faithfulness towards men. But a right view of the context will shew that it refers to fidelity towards God. Of what does the preceding verse speak? Of unfaithfulness towards God—swearing falsely in his name; that is, making a false and hypocritical profession of him; and in this verse they are described as refusing to return to him. In the fifth and sixth verses they are represented as having "broken the yoke," and as having apostatized from him; and in the seventh their going after other gods is expressly mentioned.

The word "judgment" has been taken in the same way, but not, in my view, agreeably to the context. To do judgment, is to do what is just and right; and "the way of Jehovah," and "the judgment of God," in the next verse, are the same, and hence put in apposition; the word "nor," in our version, being improperly introduced. The way of the Lord is the way he has prescribed in his word; and it is called his judgment, because it is what he has determined and ordained, or what is just and right. God had not only revealed his law, but had also appointed and ordained it for the people of Israel. His law is called a way, because it points out the course which we are to take; and it is his judgment, because it is what God has determined, fixed, and appointed. Hence in the fifth verse they are said to have broken the yoke and burst the bonds. The yoke was the law, and the bonds were those of loyalty and obedience; or they were the bonds of justice, such as were justly ordained and imposed on them.—*Ed.*

thy prophets, by which thou wouldest bring us to the right way, that we may not perish; and may we so assiduously exercise repentance through the whole course of our life, that we may ever be displeased with ourselves on account of our sins; and may we judge ourselves daily, that we may turn away from us thy wrath, until having at length finished our warfare, which we have to carry on continually with our sins, we shall come to that blessed rest which has been procured for us in heaven, by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Nineteenth.

4. Therefore I said, Surely these *are* poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, *nor* the judgment of their God.

5. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, *and* the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, *and* burst the bonds.

4. Et ego dixi, Certè (*alii vertunt*, forsan, אך) pauperes sunt hi, stultè egerunt, quia non cognoscunt viam Jehovæ, judicium Dei sui:

5. Ibo ad optimates (ad magnos, *ad verbum*) et loquar apud eos; quia ipsi cognoscunt viam Jehovæ, judicium Dei sui: atque ipsi fregerunt jugum, ruperunt vincula.

Some think that the Prophet here makes an excuse for the people, and, as far as he could, extenuates their fault; but they are greatly mistaken. For there is no doubt but that he, by this comparison, more clearly shews how past remedy was then the state of things. The sum, then, of what he says is,—that corruptions so prevailed, not only among the multitude, but also among the chief men, that there remained no soundness, as they say, from the head to the sole of the foot. Nearly the same thing, only in other words, is stated by Isaiah in the twenty-eighth chapter; for after having spoken generally against the people, he assails the leading men, and says that they were inebriated no less than the common people, that they were inebriated with wine and strong drink. But the meaning is, that they were like drunken men, because they felt no shame, while they abandoned themselves to deeds the most disgraceful.

To the same purpose is what Jeremiah says here, when he declares, that he thought that they were the poor who had thus sinned, and obscure men and of no repute; but

that he had found the same thing among the chief men as among the common people. He might, indeed, have only said, "Not only the lowest orders, the multitude, are become corrupt, but also the chief men, who ought to have excelled the rest." But much more striking is the comparison, when he says, "It may be, that these miserable men have thus sinned because they understood not the law of God, nor is it a matter of wonder; but greater integrity will be found in the chief men." By speaking thus the Prophet brings the reader into the midst of the scene, and shews to him that not only all the people were guilty, but also the priests and the prophets, and the chief men in the state. The design of the Prophet is thus evident.

I said, he says, not that he thought so; for he saw that all things were in such a disorder, that nothing better could be hoped from the chief men than from the common people. This was clearly seen by the Prophet: but, as I have said, he wished to shew here, by a striking representation, how wretched was the condition of the whole people. He says, *Surely.* The particle אַךְ, *ak*, is an affirmative, or, as in the next verse, an adversative. Some, indeed, take it here in the sense of אוּלַי, *auli*, perhaps, or, it may be; and regard it as signifying a concession, "Let us grant this," he says; "they are the poor, they are of no account, they are as it were the offscourings, who have thus sinned: it is nothing strange, if they conduct themselves thus foolishly, for *they know not the way of Jehovah, nor the judgment of their God.*"[1]

The law was, indeed, given to all without any difference; so that the common people had no excuse. But this evil

[1] It is better to take אַךְ here and in the next verse as an affirmative, Truly, surely, doubtless. *Blayney*, as well as *Calvin*, render נוֶאֱלוּ, "have acted foolishly." The verb occurs in three other places, Numb. xii. 11; Is. xix. 13; Jer. l. 36. To be, or to become, foolish, or rather stupid, sottish, or stupidly ignorant, seems to be its meaning. It is here opposed to knowledge; and evidently refers to the state of the mind, and not to the conduct. Their sottishness was their idolatry. This is the special sin referred to throughout the passage,—

Then I said,
Doubtless, the poor *are* these, they have become stupid,
For they have not known the way of Jehovah,
The judgment of their God.—*Ed.*

has prevailed almost in all ages,—that few attend to the teaching of the law; for there is no one who is not inclined to shake off this yoke. The common people, indeed, think that they have some excuse for neglecting it, because they have no leisure, and are not born for high stations. The Prophet then speaks according to this prevailing opinion; but he does not extenuate their fault who pleaded ignorance as an excuse, because they had not been taught in schools; for, as it has been said, God intended his law for the whole people without exception.

By *the way of Jehovah* and *the judgment of God*, the Prophet means the same thing: such a repetition is very common in Hebrew. God, in prescribing to us the rule of life, shews to us the way in which we are to walk: our life, indeed, is like to a course; and it is not God's will that we should run at random, but he sets before us the goal to which we are to proceed, and also directs us in the only way that leads to it. For it is the office of the law to call us back from our wandering, and to lead us to the mark set before us. Hence the law is called the *way of Jehovah;* and *judgment*, משפת, *meshephet*, as it was said yesterday, means rectitude, or a rule of life. What he calls in the first clause the *law of Jehovah*, he calls in the second the *judgment of God*. And thus he shews that they were inexcusable, who made the objection that they were miserably ignorant, and knew nothing; for it was God's purpose to shew to them, no less than to the most learned, how they were to live.

He now adds, *I will go to the great*. By the great he meant the priests and the prophets, as well as the king's counsellors, and the king himself. *I will go*,[1] then, he says, *to the great, and will speak to them*. It is the same as though he had said, that everywhere his labour was in vain, for not only he spoke to the deaf when addressing the illiterate vulgar, but also when addressing the chief men. I have said, that the Prophet did not make the inquiry as one

[1] Literally it is, "I will go for myself,"—an idiomatic form of speech. The *Welsh* is exactly the same, *af rhagof;* which means, I will go forth; but it cannot be literally expressed in another language. After the verb, as in Hebrew, there is a preposition prefixed to "me."—*Ed.*

doubtful, but his purpose was to make the chief men ashamed of themselves, and also to confirm what he had said before, —that not one just and upright man could be found in Jerusalem.

For they know, he says, &c. He declares the same thing in the same words. But we must ever remember, that the Prophet did not believe this; but he speaks of it as a thing that appeared probable: for who could have then thought that there was so much ignorance in the chief men? for they were in great esteem among the people. Since then the opinion prevailed, that all those who were rulers were well acquainted with the law, Jeremiah speaks according to what was commonly thought, and says, that they knew the *way of Jehovah.*

He afterwards adds, *But* (for אך, *ak*, is to be taken here adversatively, and its proper meaning is, nay or but) *they have alike broken the yoke, they have burst the bonds;* that is, "If any one thinks that the rulers are better than the common people, he is much deceived; for I have proofs enough to shew that their conduct is the same; they have broken the yoke of God no less than the most ignorant." By this repetition he more fully confirmed their defection, and at the same time reminded them how shameful it was, that prophets, priests, and rulers, who occupied the first places in the state, had become so unbridled in their vices. It follows—

6. Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, *and* a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, *and* their backslidings are increased.

6. Propterea percussit eos leo è sylva; lupus solitudinum (*alii per* ערבות *intelligunt* vesperas, *quia deducunt ab* ערב *quod significat vesperum; ita vertunt*, lupus vesperinus) vastavit eos; pardus (*alii vertunt*, pantheram) vigilans super urbes eorum; quisquis egredietur, discerpet (*vel*, lacerabit;) quoniam multiplices sunt iniquitates eorum, auctæ sunt defectiones eorum.

Here, at length, God shews that he was moderate in his judgments, so that the wicked in vain charged him, as it is usual with them, with too much rigour.

Some render the words in the past tense, and think the sense to be, that the Prophet reminds the Jews that they had not been afflicted without reason by so many evils, as they had deserved heavier punishments. But another view

may be taken; for we know that in Hebrew the tenses often change; and I am inclined to regard the future tense as intended; for the Prophet seems not here to record what they had already suffered, but to remind them of the heavy punishment that was awaiting them. *Smite* them *shall the lion from the forest.*

The *wolf* is called the wolf of *solitudes*, because of his coming forth from the desert. Some render the words, "the wolf of the evening;" and this may be allowed. We indeed know, that in other places hungry wolves are called the wolves of the evening; for after having sought their prey in the day-time, and finding none, they become in the evening almost mad, and their hunger causes them to run furiously in all directions. This explanation, then, may be admitted. But as he says first, that the lion would come from the forest, it is more probable that the wolf is described as coming from the desert.[1] As to the general import of the passage there is not much difference.

He mentions here three wild beasts—the lion, the wolf, and the leopard. By these wild beasts he understands no doubt the enemies, who would shortly attack them with the greatest cruelty. It is indeed true that the Jews, before the time in which Jeremiah spoke to them, had been afflicted with many evils; for God had not punished them only once, but had given them frequent warnings; and had there been any hope of repentance, they might have still continued in safety, though considerably reduced. But Jeremiah seems to predict future punishment: he therefore refers, not only to the Egyptians and the Assyrians, but also to other enemies. For that people, we know, were hated by all their neighbours, and had suffered grievous wrongs even from

[1] The word, as found here, is never used for the evening; it ever means the desert, or uncultivated plains. The plural termination of the word, when it means the evening, is יִם־, and not וֹת־, as here. See Num. xxii. 1; Jos. v. 10; Jer. xxxix. 5. In these verses it is rendered "plains;" they were evidently uncultivated, and might properly be called deserts. The *Vulgate* and the *Targum* have led commentators astray as to this word. The *Septuagint* have completely misunderstood it, and have rendered the sentence, "The wolf even to the houses (ἕως τῶν οἰκιῶν) has destroyed them." The version of *Blayney* is, "The wolf of the plains:" and he says in a note, that they were "uninclosed commons," used for sheep-walks, which were commonly "infested with wolves."—*Ed.*

their own kindred. Since, then, many nations were hostile to the Jews, it is nothing strange that the Prophet enumerates here three sorts of wild beasts; as though he had said, that enemies would come from every quarter, who would, like lions, wolves, and leopards, vent their fury on them, because they had so often, and for so long a time, provoked God's wrath. At the same time, God does here check those false complaints which are wont to be often alleged by the wicked, and shews that he is a righteous Judge, and that the punishments he inflicted could not be blamed by the Jews: and it was for this purpose that he used the particle, *Wherefore*—עַל־כֵּן, *ol-kan.*

He also adds, *A leopard shall watch,* that he may *tear* all who shall go out of *the cities.* This language is no doubt metaphorical; and what he means is, that when the enemies would occupy the land, the Jews would be shut up in their cities, and would not venture to go forth, for dangers would await them everywhere.

At the end of the verse he repeats again, and speaks more fully of what he meant by "Wherefore—עַל־כֵּן," at the beginning of the verse;[1] for he says, *Because multiplied have their transgressions, and increased have their defections.* By these words he further proves what he had said, that God is a righteous judge, even when he seems to be too severe: for it could not have been otherwise, but that he must have visited with extreme vengeance a people so abandoned and irreclaimable. Nor does he only call them wicked, and apostates, but he says that their *iniquities,*[2] or evil deeds,

[1] This illative, "wherefore," or therefore, or, for this cause, is both retrospective and anticipative. It is a reason given for what is contained in the latter part of the last verse, and for what is contained in the last words of this verse; it anticipates the particle "because" before "multiplied."—*Ed.*

[2] It is rendered "ἀσεβείας—impieties," by the *Septuagint;* "prevarications" by the *Vulgate;* "rebellions" by the *Targum.* It does not mean "iniquities," but wilful violations of the law in matters connected with God's worship and service. The other word means apostasies, defections from God, rendered by the *Septuagint,* "ἀποστροφαῖς—turnings away," and so by the *Vulgate* and the *Targum.* They were defections to various forms of idolatry. Their idols increased in number. The *Septuagint* render the last sentence thus, "They have become strong (ἰσχυσαν) in their turnings away." The *Vulgate* and the *Targum* are the same. The

were *many*, and that their *defections* had *increased*. And by the last expression he amplifies their guilt: for though פָּשַׁע, *pesho*, does not mean simply to offend, but to act wickedly; yet to fall away from God is a baser and a more atrocious sin. We hence learn, that such was the wickedness of the Jews, that it could not be corrected by common means or moderate punishment. He afterwards adds—

7. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by *them that are* no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.

7. Quomodo super hoc parcam tibi (*hoc est*, parcerem, *nam debet resolvi futurum tempus in modum potentialem*, quomodo, *inquit*, parcerem tibi super hoc?) Filii tui dereliquerunt me, et jurarunt in non Deo: ego autem saturavi eos, et scortati sunt (tamen scortati sunt;) et domus meretricis congregaverunt se (*vel*, in domum meretricis, *ita subaudienda erit litera* ב *servilis*.)

There is here what rhetoricians call a conference: for God seems here to seek the judgment of the adverse party, with whom he contends, on the cause between them, though it was sufficiently clear; and this is a proof of confidence. When advocates wish to shew that there is nothing doubtful or obscure, they thus deliberate with the opposite party,—"Why, I will propose the matter privately to yourself; have you anything to say? Even if you were at liberty to determine the question, would not reason compel you to pronounce such a judgment as this?" So now God shews that he was constrained, as it were, by necessity to inflict on the Jews a most severe punishment, and intimates that he was not, as it were, at liberty to do otherwise. "If I am," he says, "the judge of the world, is it possible that they can escape unpunished, who thus openly provoke me? Should I not expose to ridicule my glory? and should I not also divest myself of my own power? I should cease to be what I am, and in a manner deny myself, were I not to punish a people so wicked and irreclaimable." We now perceive the Prophet's meaning.

Some consider וְ, *vau*, to be understood, and take אֵי, *ai*,

verb עָצַם means an increase in quality or in quantity. But both verbs may be rendered here as transitives,—

Because they have multiplied their transgressions,
They have strengthened (or increased) their apostasies.—*Ed.*

for ע, *ain*, and read thus, "I will not spare thee for this." But as there is no reason to make any change, and many agree in the view that has been given, I prefer to follow what has been most commonly received. The meaning of אי, *ai*, in Hebrew is "where;" but it also means "how:" and here it is to be understood, not of place, but of manner, "How could I for this be propitious to you?"

We see how God, as it were, deliberates with the opposite party, and even appeals to them for judgment, "Say now, were I to allow you so much liberty and power as to decide the question, could I, who am the judge of the world, spare you who are guilty of such vices?"

Thy sons have forsaken me. This was the first sin: and when God complained that he was forsaken, he intimated that the people had wilfully, and from deliberate wickedness, cast off the yoke; for the same thing could not have been said of heathens. It is indeed true, if we have regard to the beginning, that all may be charged with defection, for God had revealed himself to the sons of Adam and of Noah; and when they fell away into superstitions, they became apostates. But the defection of the Jewish people was much more recent, and less to be borne: nay, when they boasted that they were God's people, who could have alleged the pretence of ignorance? We now then see what the Prophet means when he says, that God had been forsaken by the people.

He then adds, *They have sworn by a no-god.* He means, by stating a part for the whole, that the worship of God was become corrupt and vitiated: for swearing, as it was stated yesterday, is a part of God's worship. Whenever we swear by God's name, we profess that we are under his power, and that we cannot escape if we swear falsely: we also ascribe to him his glory as the God of truth; and we further testify that nothing escapes him, or is hid from his view. Hence, by saying here that the Israelites *swore by a no-god*, he means that God was deprived of his own right. They were indeed guilty of other sins; but, as it has been stated, the Prophet includes under one kind all the superstitions which then prevailed among the people. It was then the same as

though he had said, that they worshipped idols and gods, whom they had devised for themselves.

He adds a circumstance which enhanced their guilt, *I have filled them*, he says, *and they have committed adultery.* There is here a striking alliteration, which must not be omitted. He had said, יִשָּׁבְעוּ, *ishbon*, "they have sworn;" and now he says, אִשְׂבַּע, *ashbo*, "I have filled them." The only difference is in a point; when placed on the left side of שׂ, *shin*, the word means to fill, and when on the right, to swear.[1] The Prophet then says, that they had *sworn* to another God, and yet had been *filled.* God shews here how base and disgraceful had been the ingratitude of the people; for they had been filled to the full with all blessings, and yet they did not acknowledge their own God, who had been to them a Father, so kind and bountiful: *I have filled them*, he says, *and they have committed adultery.*

Now this passage teaches us, that they who go astray, when allured by God's paternal kindness and bounty, are on that account the more unworthy of pardon. When men grow wanton against God, while he is kindly indulging them, they no doubt treasure up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath, as Paul tells us in Rom. ii. 5. Let us then take heed, lest we indulge ourselves, while God is, as it were, indulging us; and lest prosperity should lead us to wantonness: but let us learn to submit ourselves willingly to him, even because he thus kindly and sweetly invites us to himself; and when he shews himself so loving, let us learn to love him.

He says, that they *committed adultery.* This may be taken metaphorically: but as in the next verse he inveighs against their vagrant lusts and adulteries, this phrase may be taken in its literal sense. I yet think that adultery here is to be understood figuratively, as meaning that they had no spiritual chastity, inasmuch as they did not give God his own glory. He further says, *And at the house of the harlot have they assembled together.* The word "house" may be taken in the nominative case, as the Jews might have been called

[1] This has been done by the Punctuists, and is no part of the language. —*Ed.*

the house of the harlot; as though the Prophet had said, that all Jerusalem and Judea were like brothels. But some consider ב, *beth*, to be understood, so that they assembled themselves, as it were, at the house of a harlot; and that he thus alludes to the temple. And it is a mark of great shamelessness, when many adulterers or wanton men assemble in one house; for most are ashamed of their adulteries, so that they endeavour to hide their baseness: but when they come together in troops, as though under an uplifted banner, it is a proof that there is no shame, but that they thus disregard all decency, like brute beasts. The most suitable meaning then is, that they are said to have assembled together in brothels, because they gloried in their own superstitions and sacrileges.[1] It follows—

8. They were *as* fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.

8. Equi saginati (*alii vertunt*, armati, *intelligunt phaleratos*) manè surgentes (*alii vertunt*, trahentes, *deducunt* à משך, *sed rectiùs alii deducunt a* שכם, *et nomen esse existimiant;*) quisque ad uxorem proximi sui hinnit (*est quidem futurum tempus, sed significat continuum actum.*)

Jeremiah comes now, I think, to the second table, and mentions one kind of evil; but his object was to shew that there was no chastity, no faithfulness, no honesty in that people. He therefore compares them to wanton and lustful horses, and thus exposes their infamous conduct. Had he said that every one did lie in wait for the bed of his neighbour, it would have been a heinous crime; but when he calls their lust *neighing*, and calls them *horses*, and those well *fed*, and who *rise early* after they are filled, he doubtless shews that such was their incontinence, that they were not only wanton and adulterous, but that they were worse and more base, for they differed nothing from lustful horses, and horses well fed. Some read the last word "armed," deducing it from זין, *izan*, which means to be armed; and others derive it from זון, *zun*, which signifies to eat, and hence they take מזון, *muzan*, for food. There is indeed no doubt but that it means here "fed," or fat; for why should

[1] The last line may be rendered thus,—

And the house of the harlot they crowd.

The verb for "crowd" seems here to be transitive, though it be intransitive in Micah v. 1.—*Ed.*

he call them armed horses? What some say, that they rose early after having committed adultery, in order to exhibit their disgrace, and to boast of their vices, is too far-fetched. What is meant is, that they were strong horses, and active, and that they rose up early after having been well fed.[1]

We now then understand the Prophet's object: the sum of the whole is,—that there was no chastity among the Jews, for they gave themselves up to wanton lusts, not only like adulterers and whoremongers, but like lascivious horses. Nevertheless, as we have said, he includes here, under incontinency, thefts, frauds, rapines, and all vices of this kind; for he no doubt charges the Jews as guilty of transgressing against the second table of the law. He afterwards adds—

9. Shall I not visit for these *things?* saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?	9. An non super his (*vel*, super hoc) visitabo (*vel*, non visitarem,) dicit Jehova? et an in gente quæ talis est (quæ secundum hanc) non se ulciscetur anima mea?

God again holds, as it were, a conference with them, and for this purpose,—that he might check all their complaints and close their mouths, lest they should object and say, that they were too severely treated. That this objection then might be removed, God repeats that he could not pardon such atrocious sins. And this principle is adopted, that it was impossible not to punish such wicked men who would not repent. For since God is the Judge of the world, he can

[1] The literal rendering of this verse, and countenanced by ancient versions, is as follows,—

Horses well fed! libidinous have they become;
They neigh, every one at the wife of his neighbour.

Both *Venema* and *Blayney* agree in giving this meaning.

It does not seem, when the whole context is viewed, that adultery here is to be taken in its literal sense. It is spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, that is referred to throughout the chapter. Besides, the comparison in this verse is such, that its application is more suitable to idolatrous acts than to those which are adulterous. The same may be said of what is found in the preceding verse,—that they crowded the house of the harlot. This is not so much the case in adultery as in idolatry, when people fill their idolatrous temples. A simile is sometimes carried beyond what is actually the case, in order to convey a right idea of what it is intended to illustrate. When they are said to be like well-fed stallions, and neighing at the wives of their neighbours, the purpose was to shew with what intense ardour they were devoted to idolatry: and the degrading comparison was no doubt made in order to pour contempt on their mad propensity: it was like the impetuous instinct of an animal, uncontrolled by any reason, persuasion, or remonstrance.—*Ed.*

no more surrender his judgment than his essence. As, then, the majesty of God and his office of a Judge are inseparably connected, the Prophet concludes, that what the Jews thought was impossible, that is, that they could escape unpunished, and yet continue to provoke God, as it were, by open war, with their dreadful sins: *Should I not* then *visit for this, saith Jehovah?*

Here is introduced the name of Jehovah. An earthly judge may pardon the ungodly and the worst of men; but this cannot be done by God; for whenever God pardons, he leads sinners to repentance: so that he never suffers sins to be unpunished. For he who repents becomes his own judge, and thus anticipates God's judgment. Where then there is true conversion, God shews no indulgence to sins. But when persistency in sins is such, that they who are warned despise all instruction, it is impossible that God should forgive; as in that case he would renounce his own glory, which can never be. *Should I not* then *visit for this, saith Jehovah?*

And on such a nation as this should not vengeance my soul take? God speaks here after the manner of men, for he seeks no vengeance; and when he speaks of his soul, even this is not strictly suitable to him; but there is here nothing obscure; for what is meant is, that he is at enmity with wickedness, as it is said in Ps. v. 5, that he cannot bear iniquity. Since it is so, it follows that he must either be thrust from his celestial throne, or punishment must be inflicted on the wicked, who remain perverse and set no end nor bounds to their sins. Whenever then delusion creeps over us and Satan seeks by his allurements to lead us to forget God's judgment, let this come to our minds—that God would not be God, except he were to punish sins. It is then necessary that he should punish sins or be displeased with us: but, as it has been said, he cannot be inconsistent with himself or dissimilar in his nature, since no change can take place in him. Either then his hand is stretched out to punish our sins, or his judgment must be anticipated by us. And how can this be done? By learning to bring sentence against ourselves, by becoming displeased with our sins.

When therefore our conversion will be of this kind, then God will be merciful to us; and thus he will not pardon our sins, as though he approved of them, or as though he did not exercise his office as a judge. But as I have said, what is here taught is rightly addressed to those who are either refractory, or whom Satan renders so stupid and forgetful, that they call not themselves to an account; in short, what is here said will render the ungodly, who go on in their perverseness, inexcusable, or it will awake those who are healable, that they may judge themselves, and not wait until God stretches forth his hand to execute extreme punishment.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are at this day inclined to those vices, to which we learn thine ancient people were too much given,—O grant, that we, being governed by thy Spirit, may not harden ourselves against those thy holy warnings, by which thou daily reprovest us and our sins, but that we may be teachable and obedient: and as we have hitherto too much resisted thee and carried on war with thy justice, may we learn to fight with ourselves and with our sins, and rely on thy word, until we gain the victory, and at length attain that triumph, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twentieth.

10. Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they *are* not the Lord's.

10. Ascendite muros ejus et diruite (*vel*, dissipate;) et consumptionem ne feceritis (*vel potius*, finem;) auferte propagines ejus (*vel*, ramos, *vel*, dentes murorum, *ut alii vertunt*, *vel*, pinnas,) quia non sunt Jehovæ.

Here God by the mouth of his Prophet addresses the enemies of his people, whom he had appointed to be the ministers of his vengeance: and this was usual with the prophets, when they sought more effectually to rouse and more sharply to touch the hearts of men; for we know how great is their indifference when God summons them to judgment. As then Jeremiah saw that simple instruction availed but little, he used this mode of speaking. He then in the person of God addresses the Chaldeans, and bids them to come to attack Jerusalem. The prophets often speak thus,—

" Hiss will God for the Egyptians," or, " Sound shall the trumpet, and he will send for the Chaldeans." (Is. v. 26; vii. 18.) But the representation is more effectual to penetrate into the hearts of men, when the Prophet at God's command assembles enemies as a celestial herald and bids them what to do, even to destroy the whole city.

He says first, *Ascend ye her walls.* By which words he intimates, that the Jews in vain boasted of the height of their walls, for God would make their enemies to ascend them, so that the entrance would not be difficult. They hoped indeed that they were safe, because the city was well fortified. Hence he says, that they were deceived; and he exposes their folly, for their walls would not protect them.

He afterwards adds, *An end do not make.* This sentence is explained in two ways. Some take it in a good sense, as though God mitigated the extremity of their punishment, according to the meaning which some attach to the words in the last chapter; for though God in that passage terrified the Jews, yet they consider that by way of mitigation this was added, " I will not yet make a consummation," that is, there will be some remaining. And the prophets are wont thus to speak, when they intend to shew that some seed will ever remain, so that the Church shall not wholly be destroyed. Thus also do the same interpreters explain this passage, as though God had said, that the ruin of Jerusalem would be such that the Church would still continue, for there would be no consummation. But others take כלה, *cale*, as signifying an end: and this meaning is more suitable; for God in this verse severely threatens the Jews with destruction. It is no objection, that it is said elsewhere, that the consummation would not be complete; for it is quite evident that the prophets do not always adopt the same mode in speaking: when they denounce vengeance on the reprobate, they leave no hope; and so this mode of speaking often occurs, " I will make an end:" but when they address the faithful, they moderate the severity of their threatenings by saying, " God will not make a consummation." I am therefore disposed to take their view, who regard consummation here as signifying an end; and כלל, *calal*, means to finish. The mean-

ing then is, "Demolish the city, and let there be no end," that is, destroy it entirely.[1]

To the same purpose is what immediately follows, *Take away her shoots,* or her branches, or the teeth of her walls, as some render the word. I think, however, that the Prophet refers to the width of the walls in their foundations; for we know that walls are so built, that the foundation is wider than the upper structure. The word which the Prophet uses, means shoots, which spread far and wide. They who render it, the wings of the walls, seem not to me to understand what the Prophet means; for he speaks not here of the top of the walls, but of the foundations, as though he had said, "Overthrow or demolish from the foundation the walls of the city:" and why? *They are not Jehovah's,* he adds. The Jews were inflated with this empty confidence,—that they were safe under the protection of God; for they imagined that God was the guardian of the city, because the sanctuary and the altar were there. Hence the Prophet declares, that the walls or the foundations were not God's.[2] Nor could it have been objected, that it is said elsewhere, that the city had been founded by the Lord: God had indeed chosen his habitation and his throne there; but on this condition—that the people should faithfully worship him. When Jerusalem was made a den of thieves, God departed thence, according to what is said by Ezekiel in chap. xiv. Here then the Prophet reproves that foolish confidence, by which the Jews deceived themselves, when they thought that God was in a manner bound never to forsake the defence of the city. He denies that their walls and foundations were God's; for the Jews by their sins had so polluted the whole place, that God could not dwell in such filth. It follows—

[1] See Note on chap. iv. 27.

[2] It is true the word means shoots or branches; but as the root means to spread, it evidently signifies here battlements, bulwarks, or ramparts. It is rendered "ὑποστηρίγματα—props, pillars," by the *Septuagint;* "propagines—shoots," by the *Vulgate;* "foundations," by the *Syriac* and *Arabic;* and "palaces," or "towers," by the *Targum.* Our version has the most suitable word—"battlements." *Blayney* has "branches," and thinks that the cities of Judea are meant; but this is not suitable to the context. —*Ed.*

11. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the Lord.

11. Quoniam transgrediendo transgressi sunt in me domus Israel et domus Jehudah, dicit Jehova.

The verb בגד, *begad*, means to deceive, to act perfidiously. God then charges the Jews here with perfidy, because they had revolted from him: for he does not only complain that they had in some measure sinned against him, and that he was therefore offended with them, but he charges them with general defection. Hence he says, that both the Israelites and the Jews had become perfidious and apostates. The people, we know, were now divided into two kingdoms: and though Jeremiah had been given especially as a teacher to the tribe of Judah, it was yet his duty to labour also for the Israelites. The kingdom of Israel was now in some measure fallen, for four tribes had been driven into exile, and the kingdom was dismembered and feeble. He yet wished to do all the good he could to the remnant. Hence he says here, that they were wicked apostates, for they had *acted perfidiously* towards God.[1] And as this charge was heinous, and might have deeply wounded their minds, he ascribes to God what the Jews would have hardly endured as coming from him; and says, thus *saith Jehovah*, as though he had said, "There is no reason for you to contend with me, as though I had dealt severely with you: contend with God himself, since he it is who declares that you are all perfidious." He afterwards adds—

12. They have belied the Lord, and said, *It is* not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine.

12. Negarunt Jehovam (*alii vertunt*, mentiti sunt Jehovæ,) et dixerunt, Non est, et non veniet super nos malum; et gladium et famem non videbimus.

[1] The verb בגד, when followed by ב as here, means to deal deceitfully, perfidiously, or treacherously, with one. See Ex. xxi. 8; Jud. ix. 23; Lam. i. 2. It may be rendered here to dissemble,—

For they dissembling have dissembled with me,
The house of Israel and the house of Judah, saith Jehovah.

As the verb is repeated, if we render it "to act perfidiously," instead of repeating the words, to give them their force and meaning, we must say,

For they have dealt most perfidiously with me.

To "deal unfaithfully," as rendered by *Blayney*, is too feeble an expression. To "prevaricate" is the word used by the *Vulgate*, and the same by the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*.—*Ed.*

He expresses more clearly and fully what he had previously said. Their perfidy was, that they had *denied God.* I do not wholly reject what others have said, that they lied to God: but as ב is here used after כחש, I cannot see that it means to lie. It ought to have been in that case, כחשו, ליהוה *cacheshu La-Jeve:* but as it is ביהוה, *Be-Jeve,* I doubt not but that he simply declares that they *denied* God; and the context seems to require this meaning; for he immediately adds, that they *said there was no God.*[1] This certainly was not to lie to God, but to reject him as one who did not exist. As then the sense would be less significant, were we to say, that they lied to God, I am inclined to take the other meaning, that they *denied* God; that is, that they wholly disregarded him or sought to erase the remembrance of him.

[1] According to all the instances in which the verb occurs, followed by ב, its meaning is what *Calvin* states, though not so rendered uniformly in our version. The verb, followed by ב, occurs elsewhere five times,—Lev. vi. 2, 3; Jos. xxiv. 27; Job viii. 18; Is. lix. 13; Hos. ix. 2. In Lev. vi. 3, וכחש בה, ought to be rendered, "and denieth it;" and so the verb ought to be rendered in the previous verse, "and deny to his neighbour his deposit," &c. It is rendered here "lied to the Lord" by the *Septuagint* and the *Targum;* and "denied the Lord" by the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac,* and so also by *Piscator, Venema,* and *Blayney.* The denial seems to have been as to the Lord speaking in his prophets. *Calvin* appears to have gone too far in saying that they denied his existence. The expression which follows, "Not he," means that he was not in the prophets. The import is correctly given in our version, "*It is* not he," that is, who speaks in the prophets. The verse might be literally given thus,—

12. And they deny Jehovah,
And say, "*It is* not he,
And come upon us shall not evil,
And the sword and the famine we shall not see."

Then the following verse, which is a continuation of what they said, proves clearly what the meaning of this is,—

13. "And the prophets shall be wind,
For the word *is* not in them:
Thus shall it happen to them,"
or,
Thus shall it be done to them.

That is, they shall be found out to be like the wind, having spoken nothing real, such as shall be accomplished. Indeed the last line may be translated thus,—

Thus shall he do to (or, deal with) them.

The reference in this case is to God, who, they thought, would render abortive, or turn as it were into wind, what the prophets had threatened. Their blindness and presumption appear to us to have been extreme.—*Ed.*

The reason which follow requires special notice: *They have said, He is not.* To render this more clear, he says, that they boasted of impunity. It seemed, no doubt, to exceed credibility, when the Prophet said that God was denied by the Jews; but that they might not evade the charge, he confirmed it, *they have said, He is not.* We are further to consider why he brought against them so grievous and so atrocious a charge: it was, because they boasted that they should be free from the punishments which the prophets had threatened.

We then see what Jeremiah alleges against them, even their contempt and also their perverseness. They felt themselves safe notwithstanding the prophetic threatenings. The Prophet says, this is nothing less than wholly to deny God. Were we judges, this declaration might appear too severe: but let us pause, and acquiesce in what the Holy Spirit has pronounced.

And this is a remarkable passage, whence we may learn how abhorred by God is their indifference, who harden themselves against his threatenings, and wholly disregard his judgment. For if we acknowledge him as God, his power as a judge ought not to be taken away. What does God's name mean? Doubtless they who imagine that God remains quiet in heaven and enjoys his leisure and his rest, though they may not in words deny God, yet treat him with mockery: there is in them at the same time no religion and no thought of a divine being. Let us then carefully notice this passage, in which the Prophet testifies that God is denied by us, except we be moved by his threatenings; for the torpidity in which we indulge ourselves, when God denounces his judgment on us, is the same as the denial of him; nor is there anything by which they can extenuate their sin who thus despise the vengeance of God. For the Holy Spirit has once for all declared, that all who trifle with the prophets do in their hearts say, that there is no God, inasmuch as they deprive him of his power and of his office, and leave him only a naked essence; nay, they make him only a creature of the imagination or a mere phantom.

We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet:

he more fully explains the perfidy with which he had charged the Jews; for he says that they *denied God,* and *said, He is not;* and they proved that they did all this, for they did not believe the evil to be at hand which the prophets had announced. It afterwards follows—

13. And the prophets shall become wind, and the word *is* not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.

13. Et Prophetæ erunt in ventum, et sermo non est in eis; sic fiet illis.

The Prophet goes on with the same subject; and this passage is worthy of especial notice, as it commends to us in no common way the public preaching of the truth. For what can be imagined more abominable than to deny God? yet if his word is not allowed to have authority, it is the same as though its despisers attempted to thrust God from heaven, or denied his existence. We hence see how the majesty of God is, as it were, indissolubly connected with the public preaching of his truth. The design of this verse is the same, in which Jeremiah refers to the contempt manifested by the people.

He introduces the Jews as saying, *The prophets shall become wind, there is not in them the word,* and the evil with which they have threatened us, *shall come upon their own heads.* It may have been, that the Jews did not openly give vent to such a blasphemous language; but so gross was the contempt they shewed towards the prophets, that this impiety was sufficiently conspicuous in their whole life. It was not then without reason that the Prophet charged them with so base an impiety, that they said, that the prophets would become wind. The same is the case now; the greater part, when God thunders and gives proofs of his vengeance by his servants, ridicule everything, and heedlessly cast away every fear,—"Oh, they are mere words; for the preachers fulminate boldly and terribly in the pulpit; but the whole vanishes, and whatever they denounce on us will fall on their own heads." We see at this day that many ungodly and profane men use such a bantering language as this. Though it might not have been, as I have said, that the Jews dared thus openly to shew their contempt towards God; yet the Holy Spirit, who extends his authority over

the hearts, minds, and feelings of men, justly charged them with this gross impiety. It may also be learnt from other places, that they made such advances in audacity, that they hesitated not to treat with scoffs the threatenings announced by the prophets. However this may have been, the Prophet sets forth by a striking representation how great was the contemptuous perverseness of the people towards God: for there is here a vivid description, by which he sets as it were before our eyes how impious the Jews had become; inasmuch as they dared openly to assault the prophets and wilfully to charge them with declaring what was vain, *The prophets,* they said, *shall become wind;* and farther, *There is not in them the word.*

By these words the Jews denied that the prophets were to be believed, however they might pretend God's name, for they boasted falsely that this or that was committed to them from above. Thus it was, as we see, that every instruction was trodden under foot, and the same we find to be the case in the present day; for what reverence is manifested anywhere for God's word? This passage then ought to be especially noticed by us; for it shews as in a mirror to what extent of audacity and madness men will break forth when they begin to discredit God's word.

They afterwards add, *Thus shall it be done to them;* or, "May it be thus done to them;" for some regard the words as an imprecation, as though the wicked had said, "Let the prophets find to their own destruction what the sword, the famine, and the pestilence are; as they cease not continually to stun our ears with these terrible things, may they themselves experience these scourges of God." But we may retain the form of the verb, *Thus shall it be done to them;*[1] as though they set themselves in opposition to God's servants, and pretended that they were God's prophets, "Oh! we have a prophecy too: they terrify us by announcing the sword, the famine, and the pestilence; we can in our turn retaliate

[1] This sentence is left out in the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*, but retained by the *Vulgate*,—"Hæc ergo evenient illis—These things shall therefore come to them." This meaning the original will hardly bear. The reference seems to be to the Prophets becoming wind, being so proved by the event.—*Ed*

on them, and declare that the pestilence, the war, and the famine are nigh them; for what authority have they thus to assail us? Have we not authority to do the same to them?" We now then perceive what is meant in this last clause. It now follows—

14. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

14. Ergo sic dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum, Quia protulistis verbum hoc, Ecce ego dabo verba mea (*vel*, ponam verba mea) in ore tuo quasi ignem (*vel*, in ignem,) et populus hic, lignum, et vorabit eos.

God shews here how intolerable to him was their wantonness in despising the prophets, through whom he would have himself attended to. Though Christ did not refer to this passage, when he said, "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me," (Luke x. 16,) yet it contains an eternal law; for God's will from the beginning has been, that his servants should be obeyed, as though he himself had come down from heaven. Hence the Jews dealt no less contumeliously with God in despising his prophets, than if they had dared to treat God himself with contempt. God then now shews how much he abhorred that madness, through which they rendered void all the labours of his servants.

Therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts. Jeremiah made this preface, that he might more effectually rouse the Jews; for if he had omitted *Thus saith Jehovah*, and had begun thus, "Because ye have announced this word, behold, as fire shall be the word of God," his doctrine would have been objected to, and treated with contempt. But now, by alleging the name of God, and that not simply, but by adorning it with a high attribute, and calling him "the God of hosts," he makes known his power in order to strike them with fear. He then says, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, *Because ye have spoken this word*," &c. Here he changes the persons often; and it behoved him to do so, that there might be more force and point in what he said. He ought to have said in the third person, "Because they have spoken thus, Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth," &c.: but he now addresses the people, and then he turns to his servant Jeremiah. He therefore says, "Ye have

indeed spoken thus;" that is, "Ye have scoffingly spoken, as though my prophets had nothing but the empty sound of words;" *Behold,* he says, *I will make my words in thy mouth like fire,* (he thus addresses the Prophet,) *and this people* shall be *wood, and* the fire *shall devour them.*

God compares his own word to fire, not as in other places, nor for the same reason; but this similitude has a particular meaning,—that the prophetic word would consume the people as fire consumes dry wood or straw. In other places the word of God is called fire, because it kindles the hearts of men, because it cleanses or burns the filth within. But he treats not here of the benefit or the fruit which the faithful derive from God's word: but God declares only that the doctrine of the Prophet would prove fatal to the people; and hence he expressly says, "I make my words in thy mouth like fire." Had he said, "Behold, my words shall be like fire, and this people shall be stubble," it would not have been sufficiently expressive. But as the people had been accustomed to scoff and say, "Ah! what are these prophets, and what are their words? they beat the air only;" as then the Jews had been wont to speak in this manner, he now replies to them, and says, "I will make my words in thy mouth like fire;" that is, Thy tongue alone shall be more than sufficient to destroy the whole people. Jeremiah teaches here the same thing with Paul, when he said, "We have vengeance in readiness against all altitude which rises against the gospel." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) For it has ever been an evil, common to all ages, either to neglect, or wholly to despise the servants of God. When Paul saw that the gospel was despised by many, he said that he and other ministers had vengeance in readiness; as though he had said, "As many words as we speak shall be so many swords to slay all the ungodly; and though their hardness now reject the judgment of God, their perverseness shall avail them nothing. Let them now then know that there is so much power in my word, as though God were openly to put forth his hand from heaven, as though he were to dart forth his lightnings." The same thing is what Jeremiah means here, *Behold,* he says, *I will make my words in thy mouth fire;* that is, there will be so

much power in thy words, that the ungodly shall know to their own loss that thou art the executioner of my vengeance.

This passage ought to be carefully observed by us, lest by our ingratitude we shall so provoke God's wrath against us, as that his word, which is destined for our food, shall be turned to be a fire to us. For why has God appointed the ministers of his gospel, except to invite us to become partakers of his salvation, and thus sweetly to restore and refresh our souls? And thus the word of God is to us like water to revive our hearts: it is also a fire, but for our good, a cleansing, and not a consuming fire: but if we obstinately reject this fire, it will surely turn to answer another end, even to devour us, and wholly to consume us.

But he says that this people would be *wood:* as the ungodly set up an iron front against God, they think they can thus drive to a distance his vengeance; the Prophet now laughs to scorn this madness, and says that they would be like wood or straw. It follows—

15. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it *is* a mighty nation, it *is* an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

15. Ecce ego adduco super vos gentem è longinquo, domus Israel, dicit Jehova; gentem duram (*hoc est*, quæ dura erit, *quia sequitur* אֵיתָן,) gentem quæ est è seculo, gentem cujus non tenebis (*vel*, cognosces) linguam (*nam relativum est* אֲשֶׁר) et non audies quid loquatur.

The Prophet shews here how the people would become like straw or dry wood; for God would bring a sure calamity which they did not fear. But the context is to be here observed: the Prophet had said, that the word in his mouth would be like fire; he now transfers this to the Assyrians and Chaldeans. Now these things have the appearance of being inconsistent; but we have already shewn that all the scourges of God depended on the power of his word: when, therefore, the city was cut off by the Assyrians and Chaldeans, then the fire from the mouth of Jeremiah broke forth to destroy the city and the people.

In short, Jeremiah intimates, that when the enemies came, no account was to be made of their strength nor of their forces, and that they would not bring with them any aids for the war, but that there would be the execution of what

he had said, of what had proceeded from his mouth; for we shall elsewhere see that he was sent by God to besiege the city; but with what forces? He was alone and unarmed; this is true; but this siege was not understood by the wicked and reprobate, yet it was not without its effect; for as the Prophet spoke, so God executed what had proceeded from his mouth. We hence see that the Chaldeans proceeded as it were from the mouth of the Prophet, like willing enemies, who throw darts to demolish the walls of a city, who cast stones and upset the walls by warlike engines, or like those who at this day use other warlike machines, by which they demolish cities. What then are all these instruments of war? They are the fire which God casts forth by the mouth of his servants; and the truth which had been declared by them, has accompanying it all those engines of war which can destroy not only one city and one people, but the whole world, when it shall so please him.

I bring then *upon you a nation from far.* We have said elsewhere why the Prophet refers to long distance, even because the Jews thought that there was no danger nigh them from nations so remote, as though we were to speak of the Turks at this day, "Oh! they have to fight with other nations: let those who are near them contend with the Turks, for we may live three or four ages in quietness." We see such indifference prevailing in the present day. Hence the Prophet, in order to deprive the Jews of this vain confidence, says that this nation was near at hand, though coming from remote quarters.

He says that they were a *hard,* or a strong *nation,* and a *nation from antiquity.* He means not simply that it was brave through age, but that it was hard and ferocious; for he says afterwards that they were all גִּבֹּרִים, *geberim,* that is, valiant. He then calls it a hard nation, because it was cruel, and he afterwards mentions the barbarity of that nation. But he says first that it was *from antiquity:* for it generates spirits more ferocious, when a nation has ruled for a long time, and from a period out of memory: this very antiquity is wont to inflate the minds of men with pride, and to render them more ferocious. He says then, that it was from *antiquity.*

He afterwards speaks of its barbarity: *Thou wilt not,* he says, *understand its language, nor wilt thou hear what it speaks.*[1] By language, we know, not only words, but also feelings are communicated. Language is the expression of the mind, as it is commonly said, and it is therefore the bond of society. Had there been no language, in what would men differ from brute beasts? One would barbarously treat another; there would indeed be no humanity among them. As then language conciliates men one towards another, the Prophet, in order to terrify the Jews, says that that nation would be barbarous, for there would be no communication made with it by means of a language. Hence it followed that there would be no pity to spare the conquered, no, not if they implored a hundred times; nor could they be heard, who were miserable, and such as might obtain some favour, if they were understood.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that though thou mightest justly condemn us at this day for the gross and wicked impiety, which thou didst formerly condemn by the mouth of thy Prophet in thine ancient people,—O grant, that we may not proceed in our obstinacy, but learn with pliable minds, and in true docility of heart, to submit to thy word, so that it may not turn to our ruin, but that we may by experience find it to be appointed for our salvation, so that being inflamed with a desire for true religion, and also cleansed from the filth of depraved affections and of carnal lusts, we may devote ourselves wholly to thy service, until having put off the flesh and all its filth, we shall at length attain to that perfect purity, which is set before us in thy gospel, and be made partakers of thy eternal glory in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

[1] The verb שׁמע here is not merely to hear, but to hear effectually, that is, so as to understand. It has this meaning in other places; see Deut. xxxviii. 49; 2 Kings xviii. 26. The whole verse may be thus rendered,—

15. Behold, I am bringing upon you a nation from far,
O house of Israel, saith Jehovah,—
A nation, strong it *is*,
A nation, from antiquity it *is*,
A nation, thou wilt not know its language,
Nor understand what it speaks.

The third, fourth, and fifth lines, as well as the first of the next verse, are left out in the *Septuagint*, but retained by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and the *Targum*. The two first render the word for "strong," "robustam," and the last by "fortis—brave." *Blayney* renders it "strong," which is no doubt its meaning.—*Ed.*

Lecture Twenty-First.

16. Their quiver *is* as an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men.

16. Pharetra ejus tanquam sepulchrum apertum; omnes fortes.

THE Prophet had already threatened the Jews with the vengeance of God, and had said that the ministers and executioners of it would be the Chaldeans: he now continues the same subject, and says that their *quiver* would be like an *open sepulchre*. The nations of the East, we know, made much use of arrows and darts, for they had no pitched battles; but they pretended a flight, and then suddenly turning, they hurled their darts and arrows against their enemies. The Prophet then had a regard to this mode of fighting, when he says that their quivers would be like open sepulchres. It may seem at first sight an unnatural comparison; but it is the same as though he had said, that they would be so skilful in throwing arrows as to destroy all who met them.[1]

And he adds, that they would be all *strong*, that the people might know that it would not be a slight conflict: in short, it is the same as though he had said, that this war would be a certain ruin to the Jews, in which they should all perish. He afterwards adds—

17. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy figtrees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.

17. Et vorabit messem tuam et panem tuum; vorabunt filios tuos et filias tuas; vorabunt greges tuos et armenta tua; vorabunt vitem tuam et ficum tuam; ad inopiam redigent urbes munitionum tuarum, in quibus tu confidis, per gladium.

He continues to speak in a similar way of the cruelty of their enemies; as though he said that victory was already in their hand, for they were the scourges of God. He does not then set before the Jews the troubles of war, but speaks of them as conquered; and he only shews that the Chaldeans would be cruel in the use they would make of their victory. He takes it as granted that the Chaldeans would be con-

[1] The idea intended is capaciousness. The grave is represented as never satisfied, ready to receive any number. See Prov. xxvii. 20; xxx. 16; Hab. ii. 5. The Chaldean quiver would be so large as to contain a vast quantity of arrows, as though it was an open grave.—*Ed.*

querors, for they would come armed from above: and he makes this addition,—that they would act cruelly and in an unusual manner towards the vanquished Jews.

Hence he says, *They will eat* (it will eat, for he changes the number, though the sense remains the same[1]) *thine harvest and thy bread;* that is, all that thou gatherest shall become a prey to thine enemies; for by harvest and bread he means every kind of provision. Then he adds, *thy sons and thy daughters,* which was still worse; it is indeed hard to be deprived of food, but it is still more dreadful for parents to see their children slain before them. The Prophet however says, that such would be the barbarity of their enemies, that they would not spare even boys and girls. He further mentions *herds and flocks;* and then he adds the *vine* and *the fig-tree;* as though he said, nothing would be safe among the Jews, for their enemies would plunder everything, and that being not content with meat and drink, they would kill their very infants. And further, as the Jews had fortified cities, and were on that account insolent towards the prophets, their vain pride is here brought down; for he says, that their *fortified cities* would be reduced to *poverty;* and he adds, *in which thou trustest.* All these, he says, shall fall by the *sword;* for this last word, בחרב, *becherab,* applies to the whole verse, and to each part of it; as though he had said, "By the right of the sword shall the conquerors

[1] According to the Hebrew, the verbs, except the second, are all in the singular number. The *Septuagint* have pluralized them, but the singular is retained by the *Vulgate,* the *Targum,* and the *Syriac.* It is the "nation" described in the 15th verse. The second verb may be rendered in a passive sense, and the meaning will be more appropriate,—

And it will devour thy harvest and thy food,
Devoured shall be thy sons and thy daughters;
It will devour thy sheep and thy ox,
It will devour thy vine and thy fig-tree;
It will wholly desolate thy fortified cities,
In which thou trustest, by the sword.

The language used here, and in the 15th verse, is remarkably like that of Moses in Deut. xxviii. 48-52. The second line may be deemed parenthetic. It is better to preserve the poetic singular in sheep, ox, vine, and fig-tree. As it is a reduplicate verb, entire desolation is intended, and that by the "sword" in destroying all the occupants of fortified cities. *Venema,* and others, as well as *Calvin,* connect the "sword" with all the preceding clauses; but this is not necessary, nor is it indeed suitable.—*Ed.*

lay waste thy whole country, even all thy possessions; yea, and they shall slay thy sons and thy daughters." It follows—

18. Nevertheless, in those days, saith the Lord, I will not make a full end with you.	18. Atque etiam in diebus illis dicit Jehova, non faciam vobiscum finem (*alii vertunt*, consumptionem.)

Different views may be taken as to the meaning of this verse; but the greater part of interpreters think that a hope is here given to the faithful; yea, nearly all are of this opinion; indeed I know not any one who takes another view. They then think that God moderates here what he had previously said, and that he gives some ground of hope to his servants, lest they should imagine that the Church would be so reduced as to have no seed remaining: and כלה, *cale*, as it was said yesterday, is often taken in this sense. But when I now carefully consider the context, I feel constrained to take another view, even this—that God here enhances the severity of his vengeance. And the particle גם, *gam*, "also," or even, favours this view; as though he had said, "Think not that it will be all over when your enemies shall thus plunder you of all your possessions, deprive you of your children, and reduce you to extreme want; for ye shall not by any means be thus freed from all evils, as I shall pursue my vengeance still further." There will hereafter follow promises to moderate threatenings, that the hearts of the faithful may not despond: but in this place the Prophet, I have no doubt, introduces God as a Judge, executing vengeance, as though there was no place for mercy.

Then *also*, he says; for the particle גם, *gam*, is inhansive and emphatic; Then *also, in those days;* that is, "When your enemies shall strip your land of its produce, and of all its animals, and of its inhabitants, I shall not even then cease to pursue you: *I will not make an end with you*, for there will still remain scourges, when ye shall think that rest is given to you, and that the end of evils and of all calamities had come." In this manner is God wont to deal with the impenitent; for such is their perverseness, that being smitten they become more and more hardened, and champ the bit, according to the old proverb. And hence is their hardness, because they think that God is, as it were, disarmed when he has punished them for their sins. He

therefore declares that he has in his power different kinds of punishment and different ways of punishing.[1] And to the same purpose is what follows—

19. And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these *things* unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land *that is* not yours.

19. Et erit *quum* dixeritis, Quare fecit Jehova Deus noster nobis omnia hæc? Tunc dices illis, Sicuti dereliquistis me et serviistis diis alienorum (alieni, *ad verbum, sed est enallage numeri*) in terra vestra; sic servietis alienis (*subaudiunt alii interpretes* deos, *sed pervertunt sensum Prophetæ*) in terra non vobis (*hoc est*, in terra quæ non erit vestra.)

It hence appears that what I have said is true,—that the Prophet did not soften what was severe in the threatenings which we have noticed, but that he treated the Jews according to their perverseness; for he saw that they were untameable; and the Spirit had taught him that such would be their obstinacy, that until they were wholly broken down, they would not bend their necks to receive the yoke. He further assigns the cause here, that they might not contend with God, as hypocrites are wont to do, whenever God sharply chastises them; for they murmur against him, and complain and demand reasons why he treats them so severely, as though they were wholly innocent. As, then, hypocrites made such complaints, the Prophet here replies to them.

It shall be, he says, *when ye shall say:* he addresses the Jews in the person of God. He then immediately turns God's address to himself, *Why has Jehovah our God done to us all these things?* He ascribes here to hypocrites what is ever in their mouths whenever they are summoned to judgment; for they are so well prepared to contend, as though

[1] See note on chap. iv. 27. Even if the design pleaded for by *Calvin* be admitted, there is no necessity to give the expression a meaning different from what it has in other places,—

Yet even in those days, saith Jehovah,
I will not make with you a completion,
that is,
I will not wholly destroy you.

It depends on the context what the bearing of this may be, while the sentence itself retains the same meaning. "I will not wholly destroy you, for I intend to preserve a Church for myself." He might also say, "I will not wholly destroy you, for I have other punishments in reserve for you:" and the latter, as *Calvin* maintains, seems to be the purport of the expression in this passage. Still the words themselves have the same meaning. —*Ed.*

their cause was the best that could be; and, could God be constrained to render an account, they would prove him guilty of cruelty and of immoderate rigour. We hence see how graphically the Prophet describes refractory men, who will not yield nor acknowledge their fault, but with an iron front rise up against God: and the same thing we find in other passages in the prophets, especially in the first chapter of Malachi; for there the Prophet often repeats the words of the people, "In what? In what? What means this?" So also here Jeremiah says, *When ye shall say, Why has Jehovah done all these things to us?* as though they were innocent: for the reprobate, as though they had washed away all their sins by having wiped their mouths, boldly come forth and demand a reason why God chastises them. So also in this place they hesitate not to call God their God, as though they had not denied God, according to what we have seen yesterday. For so gross an impiety prevailed among them, that they imagined that all things were ruled by chance, and that God unjustly punished them. Though then they had perfidiously forsaken God, yet the Prophet here, in order to expose their petulancy, introduces them here as saying that they regarded God as connected with them.

Then, he says, *thou shalt say*. God one while addresses the people, and at another time the Prophet. When, therefore, they shall begin thus to murmur, then thou mayest reply, *Because ye have forsaken me*. That what was said might have more weight, God would have the Prophet to speak in his name, "because ye have forsaken me," as though Jeremiah did not himself say the words, but God by his mouth; *and have served the gods of the alien*, that is, of aliens, *in your land*. God shews here briefly what the Jews deserved; and he thought it sufficient to mention one kind of sin only. We shall see elsewhere, as we have often seen, that they were in other respects wicked and guilty before God. But the Prophet observes brevity here, and charges them only with one sort of sin. *Ye shall serve tyrants*, he says, *in a strange land*, who shall cruelly oppress you, *because ye have served* their *gods in your own land*.

God reproves them here for having abused his kindness;

for he had expelled the heathen nations from Canaan, and gave that land, which was so pleasant and fruitful, as an inheritance to them, so as to be to them a perpetual rest. God called the land his own rest, because he protected the Jews there, and appointed them as the legitimate heirs of the land even to the end of the world. Hence he says now, *your land.* The reminding them of this kindness was doubtless intended to amplify their guilt; for they possessed the land by the best title, though they had not acquired it themselves.

In your land, he says, *ye worshipped gods;* he does not say, "strange gods," but "the gods of the stranger," or of strangers. The prophets often speak thus; they call them the gods of the strangers, or of strange people: but the expression is emphatical; for it was very base and less excuseable for the Jews, while they had God dwelling among them, to seek gods here and there, and as it were to entreat heathens for gods, and say, "Give us your gods." It was then this base conduct that the Prophet now points out as with the finger, *Because ye have served the gods of strangers.*

He afterwards adds, *Ye shall serve strangers;* he does not mean, as I think, strange gods; and it seems to me that those who introduce "gods" here, pervert the meaning.[1] He speaks of tyrants, according to what is said elsewhere, "I had given you my good laws, which if any one keeps he shall live in them; and ye would not obey: I will therefore give you laws which are not good," (Ezek. xx. 21, 25:) that is, "I will lay on you a tyrannical yoke, and conquerors, and those barbarians whose language shall be unknown to you, shall plunder you and your possessions, because ye have been disobedient and unteachable." It follows—

[1] The last clause has been improperly omitted in the *Arabic:* it is found in the other versions. The word for "strangers" is different from that connected with "gods." They served "the gods of the alien," or, of the heathen: they would have to serve "strangers," or, foreigners, in a land not their own. As they had adopted the *religion* of heathens, they would have to submit to the *dominion* and tyranny of heathens: and as they did the former in their own land, they would have to do the latter in a foreign land. Thus their idolatry would expel them from their own country, and subject them to the tyranny of those from whom they derived their idolatry. Thus God often makes the tempters of his people (if they succeed) to be their tormentors.—*Ed.*

20. Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying,

21. Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not.

20. Nuntiate hoc in domo Jacob, et promulgate (*ad verbum*, audire facite) in Jehudah, dicendo,

21. Audite agedum hoc, populе stulte et absque corde; oculi illis, et non vident; aures illis, et non audiunt (et non audient, *ad verbum*.)

The Prophet confirms what he had said, lest the Jews should think that they were only terrified by words, and not dread the consequences. Hence he says, *Declare this.* The Prophet, no doubt, alludes to a custom which prevailed; for wars were usually proclaimed by heralds. Enemies did not immediately march forth, but they proclaimed war that the cause might appear just. Hence God here declares, that he had spoken in earnest by the mouth of Jeremiah, as though war had been in the usual manner proclaimed, and armed enemies were already nigh at hand.

Declare ye then *this;* and what is it? *Hear, O foolish people,* &c. Here he first reproves the Jews and Israelites for their stupidity, because they were even without common sense; for the heart in Hebrew means the mind or understanding, as we have seen elsewhere. He then says, that this people were destitute of all understanding. He first calls them *fatuous* or foolish; but as many are slow and heavy and yet not without common sense, he adds that they were a people *without heart* or understanding. He seems indeed to add by way of correction, that they had eyes and ears: but his object was ironically to enhance what he had said, and to shew that they were stupid, and no less so than blocks of wood or stones. How so? "Ye have ears and eyes," he says, "but ye neither see nor hear."[1]

[1] It is better to retain the future tense, as their obstinacy is thereby more fully expressed; the whole verse may be thus literally rendered,—

Hear, I pray, this,
Ye perverse people and without understanding,—
Eyes they have, but they will not see,
Ears they have, but they will not hear.

The "this" which they were to hear is contained in the next verse. The two last lines are only explanatory of the preceding. They were "without understanding," for they would not see, though they had eyes; and they were "perverse," or perversely foolish, for they would not hear, though they had ears. When two things are mentioned and afterwards referred to, the prophets usually explain the last, and then the first, as the case is here. The two last lines may be included in a parenthesis.—*Ed.*

He no doubt alludes to the idols to which they had become devoted: for it is said in Ps. cxv. 8, that those who made idols were like them, as well as those who trusted in them; for it had been previously said, that idols had ears but heard not, and eyes but saw not. Jeremiah then indirectly condemns the Jews here for having become so stupid in their superstitions as to be like dead idols: for there is in an idol some likeness to man; it has various members but no understanding. So also he says, the Jews had eyes and ears and the external form of men; but they were at the same time no less stupid than if they were stones or blocks of wood. Now follows the proclamation—

22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

22. An me non timebitis, dicit Jehova? an à facie mea non contremiscetis? Qui posui arenam terminum mari, statutum seculi æternum, et non præteribit illud (*vel*, terminum illud; *quidam enim ad proximum referunt, alii ad prius*,) et movebunt se et non prævalebunt, et tumultuabuntur (*vel*, resonabunt) fluctus ejus (*istud* גליו *extendunt ad duo verba*,) et non transgredientur ipsum (non transilient, *est idem verbum quod paulò antè usurpavit.*)

God shews here why he had said that the people were foolish and without understanding. It was indeed a monstrous stupidity, not to fear at the presence of God, since even inanimate elements obey his bidding: and he takes the sea especially as an example; for there is nothing more terrific than a tempestuous sea. It appears as if it would overwhelm the whole world, when its waves swell with so much violence. No one can in this case do otherwise than tremble. But the sea itself, which makes the stoutest to tremble, quietly obeys God; for however furious may be its tossings, they are yet under restraint. Now, if any inquires how this is, it must be confessed to be a miracle which cannot be accounted for; for the sea, we know, as other elements, is spherical. As the earth is round, so also is the element of water, as well as the air and fire. Since then the form of this element is spherical, we must know that it is not lower than the earth: but it being lighter than the earth shews that it stands above it. How then comes it that the sea does not overflow the whole earth? for it is a liquid, and cannot

stand in one place, except retained by some secret power of God. It hence follows, that the sea is confined to its own place, because of God's appointment, according to what is said by Moses, "Let the dry land," said God, "appear," (Gen. i. 9:) for he intimates that the earth was covered with water, and no part of it appeared, until God formed the sea. Now the word of God, though it is not heard by us, nor resounds in the air, is yet heard by the sea; for the sea is confined within its own limits. Were the sea tranquil, it would still be a wonderful work of God, as he has given the earth to be the habitation of men: but when it is moved, as I have said, by a tempest, and heaven and earth seem to blend together, there is no one, being nigh such a sight, who does not feel dread. Hence then the power of God, and his dread might, appear more evident when he calms the turbulent sea.

We now see the scope of the Prophet's words: He shews that the Jews were monsters, and unworthy not only to be counted men, but even to be classed with brute animals; for there was more sense and understanding in the tempestuous and raging sea than in men, who seemed endued with reason and understanding. This is the design of the comparison.

But as it was a heavy complaint, the Prophet asks a question, *Will ye not fear me?* As though God had said, "What do you mean? How is it that I am not feared by you? The sea obeys me, and its fury is checked by my secret bidding; for I have once for all commanded the sea to remain within its own limits, and though it may be violently agitated by storms and tempests, it does not yet exceed my orders. Will not you men, endowed with reason, fear me? will you not tremble at my presence?" And he says, that he had *set the sand* to be *the boundary of the sea:* and this is much more expressive than if he had said that he had set boundaries to the sea; for the sand is movable and driven by a small breath of wind, and the sand is also penetrable. Were there rocks along all the shores of the sea, it would not be so wonderful. Had God then restrained the violence of the sea by firm and strong mounds, the keeping of it within its limits might be ascribed to nature; but what firmness is

there in sand? for a little water thrown on it will soon penetrate through it. How then is it, that the sea, when tossed by violent storms, does not remove the sand, which is so easily shifted? We hence see that this word is not in vain introduced. And there is a similar passage in Job xxxviii. 11, where God, speaking of his infinite power, says among other things, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further:" for doubtless no storm arises, except when it pleases God. He might indeed keep the sea in the same quiet state; but he does not do so: on the contrary, he gives it as it were loose reins, but he says, "Hitherto shall it come." When therefore high mountains seem to threaten all mortals, and the earth seems nigh an overthrow, then suddenly the impetuous waves are repressed and become calm.

And he adds, *A perpetual ordinance.* It is indeed true that the sea sometimes overflows its limits; for many cities, we know, have been swallowed up by a flood; but still it is rightly said, that it is a *perpetual ordinance* or decree, that God confines the sea within its own limits. For whenever the sea overflows a small portion of land, we hence learn what it might do without that restraint, mentioned here by Jeremiah and in the book of Job. We hence learn, that there is nothing to hinder the sea from overflowing the whole earth, but the command of God which it obeys. In the mean time the perpetuity of which the Prophet speaks remains generally the same: for though many storms arise every year, yet the fury of the sea is still quieted, but not otherwise than by the command of God. True then is this—that the sea has prescribed limits, over which its waves are not permitted to pass. And hence he says, *Move themselves and not prevail shall its waves;* and again, *Resound,* or tumultuate *shall they, and shall not pass over.*[1]

We now apprehend the design of this verse: God com-

[1] The reference seems to be to the decree or ordinance, and not to the boundary: therefore "transgress" is the most suitable word. I would render the verse thus,—

22. Should you not fear me? saith Jehovah;
Ought you not at my presence to tremble?
Who have set the sand a boundary to the sea—
An ordinance perpetual, and it transgresses it not;

plains, that there was so much madness and stupidity in the people, that they did not obey him as much as the sea, even the stormy sea. He then condemns here the Jews, as though they were monsters; for nothing can be more contrary to nature than for the tempestuous sea to have more understanding than man, created in God's image and endued with reason. He then adds—

23. But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.	23. Atqui populo huic fuit cor perversum et rebelle; deflexerunt et abierunt.

Here the previous verse is completed; for what is said here is connected with the question which we have noticed. But God now proves more clearly why he adduced what he said of the sea. The copulative ו, *vau*, is to be taken here as an adversative, and to be thus rendered, *But this people have a perverse heart:* for סוֹרֵר, *surer*, means "perverse;" some render it "revolting," but improperly; for it appears from many other passages that it is something more: besides, the other meaning is more suitable to the context here; for he says first, that the people had a *perverse heart;*[1] and then, that they had a *rebellious* or an untameable heart. He no doubt compares the obstinacy with the obedience of

Though toss themselves and prevail not, and roar do its waves,
Yet it does not transgress it.

The future tense in Hebrew may be often rendered subjunctively or potentially, and especially in questions. The non-transgressor is the sea—the non-transgressor of the decree, notwithstanding the tumult of its waves. "An ordinance perpetual" is rendered "πρόσταγμα αἰώνιον—an everlasting command," by the *Septuagint*,—"præceptum sempiternum—a sempiternal precept," by the *Vulgate* and the *Targum*,—and "lege perpetua—by a perpetual law," by the *Syriac*. "A perpetual ordinance" is the version of *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

[1] It is true that the idea of perverseness is conveyed by this word; but it means one bent on turning away from God. To turn away, or to apostatize, is its primary meaning, as in the latter clause of this verse; but here it is a participle in a reduplicate form, which has ever an expansive meaning. It means here either a heart continually turning away from God, or a heart resolutely determined to turn away from him. The last seems to be the meaning, as it appears to correspond with the next line,—

But in this people has been a heart,
Thoroughly revolting and disobedient;
They have revolted and gone away.

When they turned away from God or revolted, they were remonstrated with and exhorted to return; but they disobeyed; hence their thorough revolt and their going away.—*Ed.*

the sea, or sets one in contrast with the other, and conveys simply this truth, that there was more fury and stupidity in that people than in the raging sea.

And he proves that the people had a perverse heart by the effect; for they had *fallen away* and *departed.* Had he said only that they had fallen away, the proof would not have been so complete; but by adding "departed," he points out their obstinacy; as though he had said, that their corruption was permanent, like settled diseases, which can be healed by no remedies. *They have* then *fallen away and departed;* that is, "I could not bring them back." God had indeed often tried by his servants to restore them to a right course; but their perverseness only discovered itself more and more, and shewed itself to be irreclaimable; for they *departed,* so that there was no prospect of repentance. It follows—

24. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

24. Et non dixerunt in corde suo, Timeamus agedum Jehovam, Deum nostrum, qui dat pluviam et imbrem matutinum et serotinum (*diximus de his verbis alibi*) tempore suo; hebdomadas perpetuas messis (*hoc est,* ad messem) custodit nobis.

The Prophet in other words proves here that the Jews had been justly charged with perverseness: he says, that it did not come to their minds, that they did not think, to fear God. We hence see that all that is said is designed to shew, that the people were no less senseless and stupid, than if they were lifeless elements; nay, that there was more stupidity and more furious madness in their hearts than in any created thing.

To *say in the heart* means in Hebrew to weigh, to consider. We should say in Latin, "It did not come to their minds," (*non venit illis in mentem;*) that is, "Have they not been so void of common sense, that this thought did not come to their minds, or did not occur to them, *Let us fear the Lord?*" And here he takes away every pretence of ignorance, that they might not object and say, that they did not worship God through error or want of knowledge: "But ye had eyes," he says, and ye had ears, and all the faculties belong-

ing to men; God gave you rain; there has been no year in which the earth did not bring forth its fruit for you; when ye eat bread, does not the bounty of God occur to your minds? and yet ye consider not that he ought to be worshipped." We hence see that he takes away every excuse for their ingratitude by saying, that they had been inattentive to those blessings, which were seen by the eyes, and felt by the hands, and touched by every part of the body. But of the rest we must speak to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou daily invitest us to thyself with so much kindness and benevolence, and since thy word continually sounds in our ears,—O grant, that we may not become deaf through the depravity of our flesh, but be attentive to hear the doctrine of salvation, and become so teachable and obedient, that we may be willing to be turned wherever thou pleasest, and to be guided in the way thou pointest out to us, until we shall at length reach that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Second.

YESTERDAY was exhibited the senselessness of those who were not induced by God's blessings to serve him. The Prophet indeed mentioned the benefits which God usually bestows on the good and the bad without distinction,—that he gives rain and spring and autumn, and so regulates all the year as to ripen all the fruit; for by the *appointed weeks* he only means, that God so arranges the different parts of the year, that what men sow comes to maturity; and the word *reserve*, or keep, is intended to shew the same thing. For it is the same as though he had said, "The seasons through the whole year are so changed, that there is a regular succession of suitable weather preserved."

We now then understand the Prophet's object: He shews that the Jews had been extremely thoughtless; for they did not regard the paternal favour of God as to their daily food, so as to be thereby moved to worship and serve Him. Paul,

also, when addressing heathens, adduced this reason, "God," he says, "never left himself ἀμάρτυρον, without a testimony; for he gave rain and fruitful seasons," (Acts xiv. 17;) that is, he so arranged the seasons, that the care he takes of mankind may be thus seen as in a mirror. But it was the Prophet's object here to condemn the Jews for their ingratitude, because they did not consider how bountifully God had ever dealt with them and beyond what was common. For he had not only in an ordinary way allured them to himself by his benefits; but his object had been to attach them to himself by singular and unusual means. Since then he had shewn to them singular favours, the more base was their ingratitude; for they did not consider, that the many benefits which God conferred on them, were so many motives or allurements, by which he bound them as it were to himself.

We now then see the Prophet's meaning, when he says, *They have not said, "Let us fear Jehovah, who gives us rain;* that is, the vernal rain and the rain that precedes the harvest, and that also *in its season.* For hence God's providence shines forth, because the rain follows when the husbandmen have sown; and it supplies the earth with moisture; and then before the fruit ripens, God renders it plump by latter rain. And for the same purpose is added this, *Who reserves the appointed weeks,* (literally, the weeks of ordinances;) and he says, that they are the weeks of *the harvest.*[1] It now follows—

25. Your iniquities have turned away these *things,* and your sins have withholden good *things* from you.

25. Iniquitates vestræ averterunt hæc, et scelera vestra prohibuerunt bonum à vobis.

Inasmuch as hypocrites, according to what has been said

[1] *Blayney,* following the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate,* has rendered the latter clause thus,—

A sufficiency of the appointed things of harvest he secureth to us.

But the *Targum* agrees with our version; and *Gataker, Grotius, Venema,* and others, take the same view, which is more expressive and more accordant with the passage,—

The weeks, the appointed seasons of harvest,
He preserves for us.

The word חקות, means what is established, fixed, ordained, or appointed, as to time, place, course, portion, or law; and it is here, not in regimine, but in apposition with "weeks."—*Ed.*

before, often reply to God, and bring this and that objection, the Prophet here checks what they might have alleged; for he says that God's beneficence had been restrained by them, and that it was indeed their fault that it did not flow to them. For they might have thus objected, "Thou indeed preachest well respecting God's paternal bounty, because he supplies us with food; but the heat at one time burns our corn, the unseasonable rains at another time destroy our provisions: in a word, there is nothing certain, but all things are in a state of disorder." That he might therefore obviate this objection, he says, that it was on account of their wickedness and depravity, that God did not so regulate every part of the year as to allow them to see with their eyes his continued bounty.

This passage is worthy of special notice: for God's paternal favour does not so continually shine forth in our daily sustenance, but that many clouds intercept our view. Hence it is, that ungodly men think that the years are now barren and then fruitful through mere chance. We indeed see nothing so regulated in every respect in the world, that the goodness of God can be seen without clouds and obstructions: but we do not consider whence this confusion proceeds, even because we obstruct God's access to us, so that his beneficence does not reach us. We throw heaven and earth into confusion by our sins. For were we in right order as to our obedience to God, doubtless all the elements would be conformable, and we should thus observe in the world an angelic harmony. But as our lusts tumultuate against God; nay, as we stir up war daily, and provoke him by our pride, perverseness, and obstinacy, it must needs be, that all things, above and below, should be in disorder, that the heavens should at one time appear cloudy, and that continuous rains should at another time destroy the produce of the earth, and that nothing should be unmixed and unstained in the world. This confusion then, in all the elements, is to be ascribed to our sins: and this is what is meant by the Prophet. Though indeed the reproof was then addressed to the Jews, we may yet gather hence a lesson of general instruction.

These two things are then both true,—that God is not

without a testimony as to his beneficence, for he gives rain, he gives suitable seasons, he renders the earth fruitful, so as to supply us with food,—and also, that heaven and earth are often in great disorder, that many things happen unseasonably, as though God had no care for us, because we provoke him by our sins, and thus confound and subvert the order of nature. These two things then ought to be viewed as connected together: for in the ordinary course of nature we may see the inconceivable bounty of God towards mankind; but as to accidental evils, the cause ought to be considered, even this—because we do not allow God to govern the world in a regular and consistent order, but as far as we can we disturb and confound his providence. We hence see how suitably the Prophet has added this truth—that the *iniquities* of the people had turned away the beneficence of God.[1] It afterwards follows—

26. For among my people are found wicked *men:* they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.

26. Quia inventi sunt (*aut*, inveniuntur) in populo meo scelerati; aspicient (*hoc est*, astutè observabunt) secundum ponere laqueos (*hoc est*, ac si decipulas tenderent;) perditionem locant, in qua homines capiant.

What the previous verse contains is here confirmed,—that the Jews, through their own fault, had deprived themselves of God's favour. It was necessary to do this; for otherwise they would have had some answer to give, inasmuch as hypocrites, being so perverse, do not easily yield. Hence the Prophet confirms what he had said,—that there were *wicked* men among God's people. But this ought not to be confined to some among them, as it is done by interpreters, who seem not to explain quite correctly what the Prophet meant. For he does not reprove or condemn some only; but he says that the people, whom God had chosen, were *wicked.* It is then a general condemnation of the whole people, when he says, that there were *found wicked* men among God's people; as

[1] There is a correspondence between the terms here used, and those in the last verse. Their iniquities had *turned aside*, or diverted from their right course, the *appointed* seasons; and their sins had *restrained* the good, the *seasonable rain* which had been given them. As it is commonly the case in the prophets, the last thing mentioned in the previous verse, is the first thing referred to here, and then what is antecedently mentioned. —*Ed.*

though he had said, "The wicked are not to be sought among heathens, but iniquity so reigns among the elect people, that there is in them nothing sound, nothing pure."

When he says *found*, I understand his meaning to be, found guilty, or convicted: for he means that their sins were not secret, so that they could escape by evasions; but he says that they were found, as thieves are found, according to a common saying, in the very act of stealing. The Prophet then intimates that there was no need of long dispute, as though the Jews could find out some excuse, for they were manifestly guilty. But it was much more disgraceful that they should be found wicked, than that the blind and unbelieving should be found so; for God had adopted them as his people on this condition—that holiness and purity of life should prevail among them. Since then they were not only sinners, but רשעים, *reshoim*, wholly impious and wicked, it was, as I have said, a far more atrocious thing. And thus he takes away from them every pretence for evasion.

He afterwards urges still farther his charge, and says, that *every one looked*, or espied, for this is the meaning of the verb שור, *shur*. He indeed changes the number, but the sense is not rendered thereby more obscure: and to look here, is to lie in wait. Then *look*, or lie in wait, did every one, as though they were laying snares as fowlers do. He then says, that they were furnished with *snares*, by which they dragged men into destruction, after having caught them.[1] What is particular is here mentioned for what is

[1] There is a grammatical difficulty connected with the word ישור. The *Septuagint*, and the *Syriac* and the *Arabic*, omit the word, and the *Vulgate* renders it in the plural number, as if it was ישורו, which *Blayney* adopts. *Venema* renders it "upright" or just, and considers the root to be ישר, and refers to Micah vii. 4, when the upright is said to be "sharper than a thorn hedge," that is, such as were counted or ought to have been "upright." The reference here is evidently to the judge, who assumed the office of an upright one. See verse 28. The literal version would then be as follows,—

26. For found among my people are the unjust;
The upright *is* like the setter of snares;
They have set up entrapping,
Men they catch.

Thus all the parts correspond, and what is said corresponds with verse 28. The verb rendered "set up," means to settle, to constitute, to establish; the office of the upright, that is, of the judge, was set up as an office for

general: for the Prophet meant to shew that there was then no faithfulness nor integrity among the people, for every one by frauds and wicked crafts oppressed the simple. Since then they were so perfidious one towards another, he fitly compares them to fowlers, who by their snares entrap the simple birds: but he explains this more clearly in what follows—

27. As a cage is full of birds, so *are* their houses full of deceit; therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

27. Sicuti cavea plena est ave (*hoc est*, avibus,) sic domus eorum plenæ sunt fraude: propterea aucti sunt et ditati.

Jeremiah goes on with the same subject. He made use, as we have said, of a similitude taken from fowling: he now applies this similitude to the Jews,—that *their houses* were *full of fraud, as the cage* (some render it basket[1]) *is full of birds:* for fowlers, when they go for game, carry with them either bags or cages or baskets. So then Jeremiah says, that they collected plunder on every side, so that their houses were full of frauds: but by *fraud* he means spoils, which they acquired by unjust means. It may at the first view seem an obscure language; but if we take the word מרמה, *mereme*, in a passive sense, there will be nothing ambiguous. The Prophet then does not use a language strictly correct when he says, that their houses were full of deceit or fraud; but they were full of spoils which they had acquired by deceit and fraud. Hence, what he means by fraud were the plunders by which they had become rich, as he afterwards explains.

We now perceive, that the meaning of the Prophet is,—

entrapping, he being like a setter of snares. The "unjust" among the people, as stated here, were the judges; the word, רשע, is the perverter of justice, and stands in contrast with צדק, who acts justly.—*Ed.*

[1] It is so rendered in Amos viii. 1, 2. This was no doubt a wicker-basket or cage for birds, to keep them, and not a trap-cage, as suggested by the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* versions. The *Targum* is, "the house of feeding." The comparison is between a cage full of birds, which had been caught by snares, nets, or traps, and houses filled with spoils, which had been procured by frauds. And were "full" rendered "filled," as it might be, there would be no need of the metonymy supposed to be in the word "fraud,"—

As the cage is filled with birds,
So their houses *are* filled by means of fraud:
Hence they have become great and grown rich.—*Ed.*

that there was no longer a proof required, that the Jews circumvented the helpless and the poor, for their houses were filled with such spoils as made evident their wickedness: they had scraped together their riches by depriving the helpless and the poor of their substance. And hence he adds, *By this have they increased and become rich.* It is probable that they gloried in their wealth, like thieves, whose trade is to plunder: for when they increased, they thought themselves raised above all danger. They were like courtiers, who by rapines and frauds and tyrannical violence, draw to themselves from all quarters the possessions of others, so that one got annually sixty thousands and another a hundred thousands; and then they became the more ferocious, because they thought that they could not be called to an account, being blinded by the splendour of their riches. But the Prophet here derides this besotted glorying, and says, "Behold, they are become great in the world, and they would have themselves to be on this account exalted;" *increased have they,* he says, *and become rich;* that is, "If any one will now search their houses, he will indeed find many things by which they make a display before the eyes of the simple; but they are nothing but rapines, plunders, frauds, spoils, thefts, and, in a word, robberies." This is what he simply means. He afterwards adds—

28. They are waxen fat, they shine; yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

28. Impinguati sunt (*nam* שָׁמְנוּ *deducitur ab oleo,* perfusi sunt pinguedine, *si Latinè et propriè reddere velimus,*) postea nitent (*vel,* sunt candidi, *alludit ad pingues et bene saginatos, quorum cutis est nitida;*) etiam excedunt (*vel,* quamvis excesserint) verba impii (*hoc est,* scelera impiorum:) causam non judicant, causam pupilli, et prosperantur; et judicium pauperum non judicant.

Here the Prophet reproves those who were high in dignity, station, and wealth, and who wished at the same time to be deemed inviolable, because they were the rulers of the people. He had spoken before generally, but now he assails the higher orders, the king's counsellors, the priests, the judges, and all endowed with authority. He says, that they were swoln with *fatness,* that they were *shining,* though they had *exceeded,* &c. We see how he confirms what he

had briefly referred to; for as they protected themselves under the pretence of being rich, that they might not be called to an account, he says, by way of concession, "I allow that ye are bright and splendid, and indeed that ye are all over gold; but whence is this splendour? whence is this specious appearance, which dazzles the eyes of the simple? Ye are bright, ye are fat, though ye have surpassed the words of the impious, that is, the ways, the doings, and the designs of the impious." He means, in short, that it was of no avail to the wicked, that by their aspect they terrified people, that they gained great respect by their riches, and made men afraid of them: the Prophet admits that they had honours, wealth, splendour, repute, dignity, and such things; but he says, at the same time, Ye *have surpassed all the doings of the wicked.*[1] And then he brings this charge against them, that they did *not judge judgment.*

It hence appears that the Prophet was not dealing with the common people nor with private individuals; but that he openly and avowedly reproved the king's court and the judges. "They judge not judgment," he says; which means,

[1] Expounders differ as to the meaning of these words. They are partly omitted by the *Septuagint* and *Syriac*. The *Vulgate* is, "et præterierunt sermones meos pessimè—and they have passed by my words very naughtily." The *Targum* is a loose version, "They have also transgressed the words of the law, they have done what is evil." Such meanings do not correspond with the context. The words literally are, "They have passed over (or, by) the words of wrong;" but as the term for "words" often means things, affairs, matters, the version may be, "matters of wrong," or wrong things. These "matters of wrong" are afterwards specified, as will be seen in the following version,—

28. They have become fat, they have shined:
Moreover, they have passed by matters of wrong;
The cause they have not defended—
The cause of the orphan, yet have they prospered;
And the right of the meek have they not pleaded.

The word "moreover," may be rendered "though," as *Blayney* does, (see Neh. vi. 1:) but the rest of the sentence is not so well rendered,—

Though they have gone beyond the claims of the wicked.

He conceived that the meaning is, that they granted to the wicked man more than he claimed, while they denied justice to the orphan and the poor. But what is more accordant with the words is, that he states here what he afterwards specifies. It is not properly the "poor" who are meant, but the quiet, the meek, the humble: for the poor, strictly speaking, had not much to lose; hence the judges were not bribed to allow them to become a prey to dishonest men.—*Ed.*

that they had no care for executing justice, but suffered thefts and robberies to go unpunished: and he still enhances their guilt and says, *They judge not the judgment of the fatherless.* Pity towards young orphans is often found in those who are otherwise cruel; for that age, especially when deprived of all protection, touches our feelings in a peculiar manner. Since then young orphans were plundered with impunity, and found no defence from the judges, their dishonesty appeared most glaringly.

And he says, that they yet *prospered.* He again repeats, by way of concession, what he had before intimated,—that it was a foolish and vain pretence, that they openly boasted of their wealth, honours, and fortunes. How is this, he says? *They prosper; but yet they judge not the judgment of the poor,* that is, they help not the poor, but dissemble and connive at all the wrongs done to them. We now then see that he exposes to view the wickedness of the people, so that not even the principal men should be able to hide themselves; for the Lord shews that they had wholly neglected their duties, and were even destitute of all humanity. It afterwards follows—

29. Shall I not visit for these *things?* saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

29. An super hoc non visitabo dicit Jehova? an in gente quæ talis est, non se ulciscetur anima mea?

He repeats what we have before noticed, so there is no need of an explanation. But the repetition is not without its use; for the Jews had become so torpid, that all reproofs and threatenings were regarded with indifference. Hence God rouses them with great vehemence, *Shall I not,* he says, *visit for these things?* He takes it for granted, that we ought to be fully persuaded, that he is the judge of the world. It is the proper office of a judge to punish the wicked, and also to relieve the helpless and the oppressed, and to check the audacity of those who allow themselves every liberty. God then reasons here from his own nature and office, as though he had said, "Since I am God, can I suffer so much impiety and wantonness to prevail unpunished among my people?" Then he adds—

On such a nation as this, shall not avenged be my soul?

God transfers here to himself, as we have said elsewhere, what does not strictly belong to him; but it is the same as though he had said, "There is no one among earthly judges so void of feeling as to bear such indignities; for when the judge sees that he is treated with contempt by the wicked, is he not provoked?" *Avenged then shall be my soul;* as though he said, that he is not so soft, or so slothful, or so careless, as not to take vengeance on such wanton contempt. It follows—

30. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;

30. Stupor (*vel*, res stupenda) et fœditas in terra (*vel*, res pudenda; שָׁמָּה, *unde nomen deductum est, significat propriè cogitare vel reputare; sed videtur per antiphrasin Deus hoc loco, ut aliis quibusdam, notare rem prodigiosam, quæ non cadit sub sensum humanum, quasi diceret hoc non posse concipi neque apprehendi hominis mente; scio hoc posse videri novum, sed tamen subest optima ratio, ut mihi videtur. Postea addit.*)

31. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it* so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

31. Prophetæ prophetant in mendacio, et sacerdotes dominantur per manum ipsorum (*vel*, accipiunt in manus suas,) et populus meus voluit ita (*hoc est*, ita vult et appetit:) et quid facietis in novissimo ejus?

The Prophet, being not satisfied with the reproof which we have observed, speaks still more strongly against the wickedness of the people. He then says, that so deplorable was their state as to make all to feel amazed. *A stupendous thing*, he says, has happened, which exceeds all human conception, and cannot be comprehended. By the two words he uses, he intimates that the impiety of the people could not be expressed in words or could not be conceived by the mind; for it was a monstrous thing. This is the meaning.[1]

Let us now see what was this monstrous thing which the Prophet here refers to, and which he abhorred. *The prophets*, he says, *prophesy falsely.* It was no doubt enough to make all astonished, when these impostors assumed the name of prophets at Jerusalem, where God had chosen his

[1] The words literally are,—

Amazement and horribleness has been done in the land.

That is, what occasioned both had been done, or what ought to have filled all with the feeling of amazement and horror.—*Ed.*

habitation and his sanctuary: how great and how base a profanation was it of God's name? There were indeed at that time impostors everywhere, who boasted that they were God's prophets, who in many places passed as oracles the delusions of Satan; but to see the ministers of the devil in the very sanctuary of God, (which was then the only one in the world,) even in the very city where he had, as it has been said, his habitation and dwelling, was a monstrous thing, which ought to have made all men astonished. It is indeed a detestable thing under the Papacy, when monks and similar unprincipled men ascend the pulpit, and there most shamefully pretend that they are the true prophets of God, and faithful teachers; but still it would be doubly monstrous, were any among us to corrupt pure doctrine with their errors and infect the people with their superstitions. It was not then without reason that Jeremiah introduced his subject by saying, that it was an astonishing thing and hardly to be conceived, when *prophets prophesied falsely.*

He then adds, *Priests receive into their hands;* so some render the words: but there may be a twofold meaning. Sampson is said in Judges xiv. 9, to have received into his hands honey from the lion, and the same verb is found there: but as it means also to rule, to govern, the exposition most suitable to this place is,—that the priests ruled by the means of the false prophets. At the same time, if any one takes the other view,—that the priests received into their hands, that is, that they gathered and accumulated gifts from all quarters, the meaning would not be unsuitable.[1]

[1] The *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate* have, "And the priests have applauded with their own hands;" and the *Targum*, "And the priests have helped their hands." Both mean the same thing, though the words are different: and *Blayney* gives the same meaning, "And the priests have concurred with them." *Horsley* says that the words literally are, "And the priests go down according to their hands;" that is, he adds, "the priests go which way their hands permit; *i.e.*, the priests are directed by them." Though the points lead us to regard וירדו as future from רדה, to bear rule; yet the context requires it to be in the past tense, as the previous verb is so, and that which follows: and therefore it must be ירד, to come down, to descend. When followed by על, as here, the preposition never means "according to," as *Horsley* renders it, but ever, upon, toward or against, and mostly "upon." See Ex. ix. 19; Num. xi. 9; Ps. vii. 16; lxxii. 6. Therefore the literal rendering is this,—

However this may be, the Prophet evidently shews that there was a mutual collusion between the false prophets and the priests. The false prophets, he says, deceive the people by their flatteries, and what do the priests? It was their duty to oppose them: *they receive*, he says, *into their hands;* that is, they are satisfied, for they see that these fallacies bring gain to them, and therefore they easily assent to what is taught by the false prophets. The same thing is to be seen at this day under the Papacy: the monks flatter the people and prop up the whole system of Popery; and hence these unprincipled men call themselves the chariots of the Pope; for the Pope is carried as it were on four wheels—the four mendicant orders. And this they boast, when they wish to shew what adepts they are in lying. The Pope then is carried by the four wheels of the mendicants. We see how he has honoured and daily honours these mendicants with privileges, and why? Because they prop up his tyranny. Such was at that time the state of the people; the priests took their prey, and the false prophets snatched also a part of it, like these hungry dogs at this day; who yet do not act so oppressively as the Pope: they lick as it were his seat, like dogs; while he and his mitred bishops devour the fattest spoils. The meaning then, that they received into their hands, is not unsuitable.

But when we consider the main drift of the passage, it is more in harmony with it to say, that the *priests ruled by their means;* for without the false prophets they could not have retained their influence over the people; they must have been repudiated by them all. Since then they ruled by their means, there was a mutual collusion between them.

He then adds, *And my people have wished it to be so.* The common people, no doubt, exculpated themselves, as they do at this day, who hold forth this excuse as their

And the priests have descended upon their hands.
An idiomatic expression, which seems to mean, that the priests assisted the prophets, according to what is expressed by the *Targum*. "Hands" signify labour, efforts; the priests joined their efforts to those of the prophets. To "concur with them" is too feeble: the line may be rendered,—
And the priests have aided them.—*Ed.*

shield, "O, we are not learned, we have never been in school, and what can we do but to follow our bishops?" Thus, then, at this day, the lower orders, the multitude, seek to cast off every blame from themselves. But the Prophet says here, that the *people loved* to have things so. And, doubtless, we shall find that to be ever true which is said in Deut. xiii. 3, that when false prophets come, it is for the purpose of trying God's people, whether they from the heart love God. It is then his object to try our religion, whenever he gives loose reins to impostors and false prophets: for every one who truly loves God will be preserved by his Spirit from being led away by such deceivers. When, therefore, ignorant men are deluded, it is certain that they are justly punished for their neglect and contempt of God, because they have not been sufficiently attentive to his service; yea, because they have wished for impostors, according to what has been also often said by the monks, "The world wishes to be deceived, let it be deceived in the name of the devil." These impostors have become so shameless, as to boast that they are the ministers of Satan to deceive men. However, that common saying has been found true; for the world is never deceived except with its own consent, and willingly; for those who are the most ignorant close their eyes against clear light, and shun God as much as they can, and seek to hide themselves in darkness, according to what Christ says, "Whosoever committeth sin hateth the light." (John iii. 20.)

The Prophet adds in the last place, *And what will ye do at last*, or at the end of it? Some omit the pronoun הוּא, *he;* and others apply it to the false prophets and the priests; but the Prophet, I have no doubt, refers to Jerusalem, *What will ye do at the end of it?* For we know that as Jerusalem had been founded by God's hand, and while it had him as its protector and guardian, it was safe; but this was a false confidence, when they despised God and gloried in their wickedness. *What*, then, he says, *will ye do at the end of it?* as though he had said, "You deceive yourselves, if you think that this city will be perpetual; for its overthrow is nigh at hand: what then will ye do, when the

city itself shall be destroyed, except that you shall be all destroyed together with it?"[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we have been hitherto extremely deaf to thy many exhortations, and also to those threatenings by which thou hast sharply stimulated us to repentance,—O grant, that this perverseness may not always remain in us, but that we may at length submit to thee, not only for a short time, but continually, so that we may to the end devote ourselves wholly to thee, and thus glorify thy name, that we may at last become partakers of that glory, which has been procured for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Third.

CHAPTER VI.

1. O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

1. Congregamini filii Benjamin è medio Jerusalem, et in Thekua clangite tuba, et Beth-hacherem tollite signum; quia malum visum est ab Aquilone et afflictio magna.

We have already seen that oftentimes punishment is not only mentioned by this Prophet as being nigh at hand, but is also set as it were before our eyes; and we have shewn the reason for this,—because men are not only deaf, but wholly thoughtless, whenever God threatens them. As reproofs make no impressions, and even threatenings are not sufficient to arouse and awake them, it is necessary to set before them vivid descriptions, and to represent the event as

[1] The "it" refers rather to the "strange and horrible thing" which had been done in the land,—

But what will ye do at the end of it?

That is, when this dreadful thing shall come to an end, when the prophets, encouraged by the priests and approved by the people, shall be found liars, what then shall you do? The *Septuagint* render the last words by "μετὰ ταῦτα—after these things," referring evidently to the particulars just mentioned, the acts of the prophets, priests, and people: but the same thing is meant. Then in the next chapter he reminds them of the approaching destruction, which the false prophets denied.—*Ed.*

present. Jeremiah continues this mode of teaching; he addresses the tribe of Benjamin; for one half of Jerusalem was in the territory of that tribe. And as he was from Anathoth, he addresses his own people and kindred rather than others, as he could use greater freedom. Had he directly reproved the Jews, they might not have so well borne with him; but as he begins with his neighbours, the tribe of Benjamin, it became more easy to bear his reproofs.

Some understand the words, "Be ye assembled, and flee;" others read, "Go ye in haste," but for what reason I know not. I do not think that flight is meant here; but I rather regard the Prophet as ironically encouraging the citizens of Jerusalem and their neighbours to go forth, as it is usual, to meet their enemies; and this we may easily learn from the context: *Be ye assembled,* he says, *from the midst of Jerusalem;* that is, Be aroused and go forth. And he indirectly condemns their indulgences, for they had been lying as it were in the bosom of their mother. Like infants in the womb, the Jews were not apprehensive of any danger; they indulged themselves, and were wholly secure and thoughtless. Hence he says, "From the midst of Jerusalem be ye assembled."[1]

Then he says, *Blow ye the trumpet in Tekoa.* They were wont, no doubt, when any danger was at hand, to blow the trumpet in that town; and then the citizens of Jerusalem went forth in large bodies to resist their enemies: for the Prophet follows the usual custom, and speaks as of things well known. *And set up a sign* on the house of Haccerem, הכרם. No doubt this place was so called, because many forces were planted there. It means literally the house of the vineyard. It is, indeed, a proper name; but its etymology ought to be borne in mind; for as vines were usually planted on hills, it is probable that this place stood high;

[1] See note on chap. iv. 6. The meaning of the verb is, no doubt, to haste, or to hasten. It is singular that the *Septuagint* render it in chap. iv. 6, "Haste ye," and here, "Be ye strong." The *Targum* renders it "migrate," or, remove ye. The idea of assembling it never has. The line rightly rendered is,—

Hasten, ye sons of Benjamin, from the midst of Jerusalem.

Where *Blayney* got the phrase, "Retire in a body," it is difficult to say. —*Ed.*

and a sign might have been thence given to many around. He therefore says, "Set up a sign," מַשְׂאֵת, *meshat*, a word derived from נָשָׂא, *nesha*, which is also found here: but some interpreters render it "fire" or bonfire; others "banner;" and others "tower." They who render it tower or citadel have no reason in their favour; for towers could not have been suddenly raised up. But it is probable, as I have already said, that thence a sign was given to those around, as from a watch-tower, whenever there was any cause of fear. I am therefore inclined to take the word as meaning a sign; for the word "banner" would have been too restricted. Literally it is, "Elevate an elevation." The word "sign," then, is the most suitable.[1]

For an evil, he says, *from the north has appeared*.[2] The Prophet points out whence ruin would soon come, even from the Chaldeans, for God had appointed them as the ministers and the executioners of his vengeance in destroying Jerusalem and the whole tribe of Judah. We hence see what the Prophet means: he ridicules the Jews, who were asleep in their vices, promising to themselves impunity, and despising all the judgments of God: "Be now assembled," he says, "from the midst of Jerusalem;" as though he said, that they could not be safe in the city, without going forth to meet their enemies: "Blow ye the trumpet in Tekoa;" and then he adds, "Let the inhabitants of Beth-haccerem," that is, of the house of the vineyard, "set up signals; for an evil is nigh at hand, and a great distress;" from whom? from the Chaldeans. The prediction was more

[1] Raise ye a sign (σήμειον)" is the *Septuagint* and the *Targum*; "Raise ye a banner (vexillum)" is the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac*. The word has no connection with "fire," as mentioned in our version, which has been derived from the Rabbins. *Blayney's* rendering is, "light up a fire—beacon;" but the words admit of no such meaning. It is a general expression, and may be rendered, "Raise ye a signal;" there is no definition as to what the signal was to be.—*Ed.*

[2] Literally, "For evil is seen from the north." So the *Vulgate* and the *Targum*. The verb in Kal, Niphal, and Hiphil, is rendered "look" in our version. See Gen. xix. 28; Judg. v. 28; Deut. xxvi. 15. But in Niphal, as it is found here, it may be rendered passively, "is seen;" and also in Ps. lxxxv. 12; and in Cant. vi. 10, and in most other places. *Blayney* renders it, "is seen coming onwards," which is a paraphrase.—*Ed.*

likely to be believed, when he thus pointed out their enemies, as it were, by his finger. It afterwards follows—

2. I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate *woman*.

2. Quietæ (*alii vertunt*, speciosam; *sed alter sensus melius quadrat*, quietæ *igitur*) et delicatæ similem feci filiam Sion.

3. The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch *their* tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.

3. Super eam venient pastores et greges eorum, figent adversus eam tabernacula sua in circuitu; pascent vir ad manum suam (*hoc est*, quisque ad locum suum).

As the place, where the Prophet was born, was pastoral, he retained many expressions derived from his education; for God did not divest his servants of every natural endowment when he appointed them to teach his people. Hence the Prophet here speaks according to notions imbibed in his early age and childhood. *The daughter of Sion*, he says, *is like a quiet maid*, that is, one dwelling at leisure and enjoying herself; and yet she would be exposed to many indignities, *for come shall shepherds, and around fix their tents;* and the whole country would be subjected to plunder. But it is doubtful whether the Prophet says, that the daughter of Sion might be compared to a maid, tender and delicate, dwelling at ease and cheerful, or whether he means, that rest had been for a time granted to the people. There seems, indeed, to be no great difference, though there is some, between the two explanations.

If we take the verb, דמיתי, *damiti*, in the sense of comparing, as interpreters do, then it is the same as though the Prophet had said, "I seem to see in the state of Jerusalem the image of a tender and delicate maid." Thus Jeremiah speaks in his own name. But the sentence may be more fitly applied to God,—that he had made the daughter of Sion quiet for a time, and had given her peace with her enemies, so that she lived at ease and cheerfully.

Though these two views differ, yet the subject itself is nearly the same. The Prophet, no doubt, condemns here the Jews for their extreme torpidity, inasmuch as they had wholly misapplied the quietness granted them by God. He then proves that they were very thoughtless and stupid in thinking that their tranquillity would be perpetual, for it

was God's favour, and only for a time. Hence he says, that the Jews were until that very day like a tender maid. For though the country of the ten tribes had been laid waste, and all had been driven away into exile, yet the kingdom of Judah continued safe. They had, indeed, been plundered by enemies, but in comparison with their brethren they had been very kindly treated. This, then, is the reason, why he says that they were like a maid delicate and tender.[1]

But he afterwards adds, *Come shall shepherds*, &c.; that is, there is no ground for the Jews to deceive themselves, because God has hitherto spared them, and restrained the assaults of enemies; for now shall *come shepherds*. He keeps to the same metaphor, "come," he says, "shall shepherds," together with their flocks; that is, come shall leaders of armies with their forces. But I have already reminded you, that the Prophet here has a regard to the city where he had been born, and adopts a pastoral language. *Come* then *shall shepherds with their flocks; fix shall they their*

[1] *Calvin*, with our version, has followed the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac* in this verse. Both the *Septuagint* and the *Targum* are widely different. The former have, "And taken away shall be thy height, daughter of Sion;" the latter, "Fair and delicate, how hast thou corrupted thy ways? Therefore confounded is the assembly of Sion." The *Arabic* is the same with the *Septuagint*, only it has "pride" instead of "height" (τὸ ὕψος). Some have viewed the two first words as substantives, and have rendered the verse thus,—

To a pasture and a delightful habitation
Have I likened the daughter of Sion.

Disposed to this view were *Gataker* and *Lowth*. But what *Blayney* has said is true, that whenever the verb here used has the sense of likeness, it is followed by a preposition. Besides, the two first words are not substantives but adjectives, as the form, especially of the last, clearly shews. The verb דמיתי has in various passages the sense of thinking, counting, esteeming, regarding, as the result of comparing things together. See Judg. xx. 5; Esth. iv. 13; Ps. xlviii. 9. There is a passage in Ezek. xxxii. 2, which is like the present, only the verb there is in Niphal; its literal rendering I consider to be the following: "The young lion of the nations art thou deemed," or, thought to be. The literal rendering of this verse is as follows,—

Home-resident and delicate,
Have I deemed the daughter of Sion.

She was so regarded by God. Not like other nations, migratory, she had a home allotted to her by God himself; and she was nursed and sustained with all tenderness, like a delicate person. But owing to her sins, foreigners, as stated in the next verse, would come and take possession of her house, and deprive her of her enjoyments.—*Ed.*

tents, and feed shall each in his place. He means that the whole of Jerusalem would be so much in the power of enemies, that each one would freely choose his own part or his own portion; for when there is any fear, then the shepherds gather their flocks, that they may assist one another; but when everything is in their own power, they move here and there as they please. This free acting then intimates, that the Jews would have no strength, and would be helped by no aid; but that the shepherds would surround the whole city and besiege it: every one, he says, would be in his own place.[1] It follows—

4. Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.	4. Sanctificate super eam prœlium; surgite et ascendamus meridie: væ nobis, quia inclinavit dies, quia extensæ sunt umbræ vespertinæ.
5. Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.	5. Surgite et ascendamus noctu, et demoliamur palatia ejus.

The Prophet leaves here the similitude he had adopted; for he does not now speak of shepherds, but expressly describes the enemies, as coming with great force, and furiously attacking and laying waste both the city and the whole of Judea. He was before like God's herald, proclaiming war; but he now, by a sort of personification, introduces the Chaldeans encouraging one another to fight. *Sanctify,* he says, *war against her.* So the Hebrews speak; for in all ages wars, we know, were proclaimed by a solemn rite. God, no doubt, has implanted this feeling in all nations, that no wars should be suddenly undertaken, and that no arms

[1] There is evidently a ו or a י wanted before the second verb in this verse. The *Septuagint* and the *Syriac* read with ו, and the *Targum* with י. The same is the case with the third verb, רעו; but there are two MSS. which have the ו here, with which the *Septuagint,* the *Syriac,* and the *Targum* agree. Then the version would be,—

To her shall come shepherds and their flocks,
And pitch by her their tents around,
And they shall feed, every one in his border.

"To pitch against her" seems improper: the proposition עליה means *by* or *near,* as well as *against.* And ידו does not mean properly *place,* but *side* or *border.* It is indeed rendered *place* often in our version. See Numb. ii. 17; Deut. xxiii. 12; Is. lvi. 5, 11; and in Is. lvii. 8, "quarter." The ancient versions differ; the word seems not to have been understood. It is rendered by the *Septuagint,* "by his hand;" by the *Vulgate,* "those under his hand;" and by the *Targum,* "his neighbour."—*Ed.*

should be taken up except for a lawful reason: for the proclamation of war was a testimony, that they did not contend with one another but for causes just and necessary. It is indeed true, that wars have been often undertaken rashly, and for no just causes; but yet it was God's will that this custom should remain and continue in use, in order to take away excuse from men given to cruelty, or led by ambition to disturb the world and harass others. This then is the reason for this manner of speaking, *Sanctify war;* it is the same as though they declared and proclaimed a just war by a solemn ceremony. It was according to the common practice that the Prophet spoke when he said, *Sanctify war against her*, as we say in our language, *Sommez-la.*

Then follows the readiness of the enemies, yea, their incredible quickness, for he shews that they were extremely swift, *Arise ye, and let us ascend at mid-day.* But they who come to assail a city do so usually in the morning. When the heat prevails, it is not a suitable time, for the heat of the sun debilitates the body. Then enemies rest when night comes, except an unexpected advantage should offer itself: but having been refreshed, they rise early with recruited strength for fighting; they scale the walls or assail the city by other means, or beat down the walls by warlike instruments: but to begin the work at mid-day, when a city is to be attacked, is by no means usual. Hence the Prophet intimates, that so ripened was God's judgment, that the Chaldeans, after having come to the walls of the city, would not wait, no, not even a few hours. *Arise ye, and let us ascend at mid-day.*

He then subjoins, *Alas for us, for declined has the day, and the evening shadows are extended.* He employs a military language; for soldiers, we know, are for the most part fierce and barbarous, and never speak in moderate terms. They have ever in their mouths, "Alas for us!" or they use some other words, reproachful either to God or to men. The Prophet then expresses the words of the soldiers; for he describes the Chaldeans, and represents, as I have said, to the Jews the scene as present, that he might dissipate their delusions, in which they were wholly asleep. *Alas*, then, *for us!*

for declined has already *the day,* already *have the evening shadows extended:* they who have added, "Too far," because they had declined more than usual, have mistaken the meaning of the Prophet. It is the same as though he had said, "Already the night is nigh, and why should we give over? and why do we not make such an impetuous assault as to take the city in a moment?" This is the real meaning of the words.

He afterwards adds, *Arise ye, and let us ascend in the night;* that is, "As we cannot take the city in six hours, (from mid-day to night were six hours, for they divided the day into twelve hours, and the first hour began at the rising of the sun, and the twelfth hour closed the day,) as then we cannot take the city in six hours, let us attack it in the night." We see here how graphically is described the extreme ardour of their enemies; for they were urged on by the hidden power of God; and this is what Jeremiah intended to express.[1] He afterwards adds—

6. For thus hath the Lord of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this *is* the city to be visited; she *is* wholly oppression in the midst of her.

6. Quia sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Excidite ligna et fundite super Jerusalem aggerem (*alii vertunt,* balistam; *sed nomen aggeris hic melius convenit;*) ipsa est urbs visitationis (*hic variant interpretes, et quidem exercitati in lingua Hebræa sic depravant sensum ut pigeat referre quid ipsi ausi sunt scribere,*) tota oppressio (*vel,* rapina; *nam* פקד *significat rapere,* rapina *ergo*) in medio ejus.

The Prophet now points out the cause why a near calamity awaited both the city and the whole of Judea. Two things

[1] These two verses seem to have been the language of the enemies on their march towards Jerusalem. When men go to a chief city from any quarter, it is always ascending. When on their march, they encouraged one another to ascend *by* mid-day, as ב may be rendered, but the day declined before they reached the city; then they encouraged each other to continue their march in the night,—

Proclaim ye against her war:
Rise, and let us ascend by mid-day.—
Alas for us! for declined has the day,
For extended have become the shadows of the evening:
Arise, and let us ascend by night,
And destroy her palaces.

The last word is rendered "foundations" by the *Septuagint,*—"houses" by the *Vulgate,*—and "palaces" by the *Targum.* This is an instance of the loose way in which the versions were often made.

To "sanctify war," is not to prepare it, but to proclaim it, as *Calvin* says, by a solemn ceremony.—*Ed.*

were necessary to be done: as the Jews had hardened themselves in their thoughtlessness, so that they disregarded all the threatenings of the prophets, it was necessary to expose and reprove this stupidity. This is what the Prophet has hitherto done. But the other thing needful to be done was, to make the Jews to know that they had not to do with the Chaldeans or other nations, but with God himself, with whom they had for a long time carried on war. The Prophet then, after having set before the eyes of his own kindred the calamity which was then nigh at hand, shews now that God was its author.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts. He reminds them here of the judgment of God, lest they thought that they could overcome their enemies, even if they fought with the greatest ardour and the greatest courage, for they could not overcome God. *Thus* then *saith* the God *of hosts;* as though he had said, "The Chaldeans will indeed bring their forces, which shall be great and strong; but the contest will be now with God, whom ye have so often and for a long time and so pertinaciously provoked." *Thus* then *saith* now the God *of hosts,*—

Cut ye down wood; that is, "The Chaldeans will not of themselves attack you, but they will fight for God, and serve him as hired soldiers." As we have seen elsewhere that God blows the trumpet, and sends by a hiss for whomsoever he pleases; so also he says now that the Chaldeans would carry on war under the authority and banner of God. Command them then did God to cut down wood and to *cast up a mound.* We indeed know that warlike engines were made of timber, but the most suitable word here, as it is evident, is mound.

It follows, *She is the city of visitation.* Jeremiah shews here that God would justly act towards the Jews, though with much severity, because they had nearly become putrid in their vices; for this reason he calls it the *city of visitation.* They therefore who render the words, "that it may be laid waste," or, "it is laid waste," misconceive the meaning; and indeed they touch neither heaven nor earth, for they consider not the Prophet's design, but only dwell on the words. But

it is certain, that Jerusalem is called the city of visitation, because God had exercised long patience and suspended punishment, until the ripened time of vengeance came, so that it could no longer be endured, inasmuch as it had become more and more corrupt through the forbearance of God. It is, he says, *the city of visitation;* that is, "The time of extreme vengeance is now come; for I have tried all means to see whether there was any hope of repentance; but I now find that she is wholly irreclaimable. She is then the city of visitation; its ruin cannot be suspended any longer."

The Prophet obviates here, as I have already said, all those complaints which the Jews were ever ready to make; for they were wont to murmur when any severity appeared, and say, "God deals cruelly with us; where is his covenant? where is that paternal kindness which he has promised to us?" As then the Jews were wont thus to expostulate with God, the Prophet says that it was the *city of visitation*, and the whole of it, and not a part only. As then there was nothing pure in it, he says that it could no longer be spared: and he adds one kind of evil; but stating a part for the whole, he means (as it is said elsewhere, chap. vii. 11) that Jerusalem was a den of thieves: he therefore says that it was full of *rapines*, and that *oppression* was in its very bowels.[1] It follows—

7. As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually *is* grief and wounds.

7. Sicuti scaturire facit puteus aquas suas (*hoc est*, sicuti scaturiunt aquæ ex fonte, *vel*, puteo,) sic scaturire fecit malitiam suam; violentia et deceptio (*aut*, vastatio) audita fuit in ea coram facie mea assiduè, dolor et percussio (*alii vertunt*, plagam; *sed nomen percussionis melius convenit.*)

The Prophet enlarges on what he had said in the last verse; for he had shewn, by mentioning one kind of evil, that Jerusalem was a den of thieves, as oppression dwelt in the midst of it. But he now, by a comparison, amplifies his former statement, and says, that violence, oppression, devas-

[1] The two last lines may be thus rendered,—

She, the city, to be visited *is* the whole of it:
Oppression is in the midst of it.

The verb הפקד is an infinite Niphal. Some, not perhaps without reason, have rendered the first line, "For thus has Jehovah of hosts said."—*Ed.*

tation, grief, and smiting, streamed forth like waters from a fountain. It is possible for many vices to break out from a place, but repentance afterwards follows; but when men cease not, and heap vices on vices, it then appears that they swell with wickedness, and even burst with it, as they cannot repress it: they are like a fountain, which ever bubbles up, and cannot contain its own waters. We hence see the object of the Prophet.

The word בור, *bur*, means a fountain, and באר, *bar*, means also a fountain, or a well, and they are no doubt synonymous: and hence appears the mistake of a very learned man among the Hebrews, who makes a difference between the two, and says that the first is a cistern, which receives waters, but has no streaming. That this is false appears from the words of the Prophet; for a cistern does not cast forth water.

But with regard to what is taught, we sufficiently understand that what the Prophet means is,—that the Jews had so given up themselves to their vices, that they were ever contriving some new way of doing evil, as waters never cease to stream forth from the fountain; and it is a proof, as I have said, that a nation is wholly irreclaimable, when there is no cessation from evil deeds, when there is no intermission of injuries, when men ever indulge in their vices; and as the Jews could not deny that such was the atrocity of their wickedness, the Prophet again assumes the name of God, and says, *Heard have been oppressions*, and *smitings* are *before me;* as though he had said, "They will gain nothing by evasions, for if they make a hundred excuses before men, it will be wholly useless to them when they shall come before God's tribunal." And he again adds the adverb תמיד, *tamid*, continually, which answers to the perpetual streaming of waters.[1] It follows—

[1] The verse, literally rendered, is as follows:—

7. As cast forth does a spring its waters,
So cast forth is her wickedness:
Violence and plunder are heard of in her;
Before me continually *are* wounding and smiting.

The first verb is in Hiphil, the second is in Huphal. "Violence" was the visible act; "plunder" or spoiling was the object or the motive; "wound-

8. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

8. Erudire Jerusalem, ne discedat (*vel*, avellatur) anima mea abs te; ne ponam te desertum (*vel*, solitudinem) et terram inhabitabilem (*hoc est*, quæ non habitatur.)

Though the Prophet had spoken as though there was no remedy for the evils of Jerusalem, he yet exhorts it to seek peace with God, and addresses men past remedy in his name. It is then the same as though God was stopping in the middle course of his wrath, and saying, "What is to be done? Shall I destroy the city which I have chosen?" He then attributes here to God a paternal feeling, as we also find in several other places: God appeared as unwilling to proceed to extreme rigour in punishing his people. "Alas! I will now take vengeance on mine enemies," he says by Isaiah. (Is. i. 24.) He called them enemies, and justly too; for as it was said before, they ceased not to carry on war against him; but he spoke with grief: "Alas! must I take vengeance on mine enemies; I would, however, willingly spare them, were it possible." God is not indeed subject to grief or to repentance; but his ineffable goodness cannot be otherwise expressed to us but by such mode of speaking. So also, in this place, we see that God as it were restrains himself; for he had previously commanded the enemies to ascend quickly the walls, to overturn the towers, and to destroy the whole city; but now, as though he had repented, he says, *Be instructed,*[1] *Jerusalem;* that is, "Can we not yet be reconciled?" It is like the conduct of an offended father, who intends to punish his son, and yet desires to moderate his displeasure, and to blend some indulgence with rigour. *Be*

ing" was the effect; "smiting" was the cause. Such is often found to be the way of stating things observed by the Prophets.

Blayney renders the two last words "sickness and smiting," and adds, that the two words are a Hendiadis, and signify "sickness occasioned by blows." The true reason for the order is what has been stated: it is according to what is commonly done in Scripture; what is found often is not the progressive, but the retrogressive order.

The *Septuagint* and the *Targum* have strangely rendered this verse in a manner wholly inconsistent with the context; nor are the other versions much better. The Hebrew is plain enough.—*Ed.*

Or, "Be warned," or, "Be reformed." The verb in Niphal is found n four other places, Lev. xxvi. 23; Ps. ii. 10; Prov. xxix. 19; Jer. xxxi. 18, and rendered reformed, instructed, corrected, and chastised. It is the same as to receive correction and to become reformed.—*Ed.*

then *instructed;* that is, "There is yet room for reconciliation, if thou wishest; provided thou shewest thyself willing to relinquish that perverseness by which thou hast hitherto provoked me, I will in return prove myself to be a father."

There is no doubt but the object of the threatenings of the prophets was to lead the people to know their sins, and suppliantly to seek pardon; for why were the unbelieving threatened, except that God thereby proved whether they were healable? It is indeed true that the reprobate are known by God, and that God does not try or seek to find what is in their hearts, as though he did not know their obstinacy; but as I have already said, God speaks here after the manner of men: and he also shews what is the end of teaching, which is to lead men to repentance; and this cannot be done without giving them the hope of pardon and reconciliation. The Prophet thus briefly shews here for what purpose he had hitherto so dreadfully threatened the Jews, even to lead them at length to repentance.

Lest torn shall be my soul from thee.[1] Here God more clearly shews that he was as yet restrained by love. He alludes no doubt to a similitude which we have observed in another place; for God sustains the character of a spouse to his Church; and hence he shews, that he had not yet divested himself of that love which a husband has towards his wife. For a husband, when grievously offended at his wife, cannot immediately throw aside his conjugal affection; some feeling of this kind will ever remain. And we have seen in the fourth chapter, that God surpasses all husbands in kindness; for he says there, "When a repudiated wife has found another husband, will the former receive her again? Return to me, thou harlot, return to me, thou strumpet and adulteress, and I am ready to pardon thee." It is the same course that God pursues here, "Be instructed, Jerusalem, lest my soul wholly depart from thee;" as though he had said, "Even though I

[1] Or, "Lest forced shall be my soul from thee." The verb means to drive, to thrust, to force. To "depart," as rendered by the ancient versions, and by our version, is too weak, and is not the idea; and still worse is "alienated," as rendered by *Blayney*. It intimates God's unwillingness, as it were, to give up his chosen people, according to what *Calvin* observes. —*Ed.*

am now angry, and have resolved severely to punish thy perfidy and rebellion, I shall yet be reconciled to thee, provided thou returnest." And it is added, *Lest I make thee a desolate land, a land uninhabited.*

The Prophet in short shews in this verse, that however grievously offended God was with his people, there was yet a hope of pardon; for he would be propitious to the people, if they turned and humbly confessed their sins, and sought to return into favour with him. It follows—

9. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape-gatherer into the baskets.	9. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Racemando racemabunt quasi vitem reliquias Israel; reduc (*vel*, redire fac) manum tuam quasi vindemiator ad canistra (*alii vertunt*, ad ramos.)

God here confirms the former statement, as though he had said, that he dreaded a sight so sad and mournful, which yet the Jews disregarded. He then shews, that he did not in vain exhort the Jews, even though late, to repent, for he foresaw how dreadful would be their calamities. Hence he says, *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Gleaning they shall glean;* for the word here does not mean to gather the vintage, but to glean, *grapiller*, after the vintage. As after the harvest the poor follow and gather ears of corn here and there, until nothing remains in the field; so also in vintages when there is a gleaning, nothing remains. Hence God in the law forbade the vineyards to be gleaned, that there might be something left for the poor. (Lev. xix. 10; Deut. xxiv. 21.) But he says here, "Gleaning they shall glean as a vine;" he speaks not of the people but of the remnant.

The ten tribes had been plundered, and at length their whole country had been laid waste. Most of them had been led into exile, but a few had sought hiding-places for a time: and he says that they were like gleanings: "though," he says, "there be a few grapes, yet these shall follow." In short, the Prophet sets before the Jews that vengeance of God, which was known already to them as much as to the Israelites, the ten tribes: and yet he shews that God's vengeance was not completed, for there were still a few remaining, a gleaning: "What then shall come of you? What indeed! ye have seen that your brethren have been plundered,

ye have seen that they and their children have been slain; ye have seen that all kinds of cruelty have been exercised towards them; and yet after the name of Israel has been obliterated, and their country now deserted, has become a waste, God will still punish the remnant, and ye shall see that his judgment will shortly overtake them; and what do ye, wretched beings, yet look for? and how great is your torpidity, which never comes to an end? why do you not seek to be reconciled to God, when such an opportunity is offered to you?"

We now then apprehend the Prophet's object. And then he says, *Return thy hand as a vintager to the baskets;* that is, "Behold the vintagers, they stimulate one another; so that there is no end of gleaning, as they ever return to their baskets, until they gather everything, until there remains not a grape on the vine."[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou kindly invitest us to repentance, and urgest us also by setting before us examples of thy wrath,—O grant, that we may not continue perversely disobedient, but render ourselves tractable and submissive to thee, so that we may not meet with that dreadful severity which thou didst threaten to thine ancient people, but anticipate the wrath

[1] *Blayney's* version is,—

Turn again thine hand, like a grape-gatherer, unto the baskets.

"That is, Take thou again into thine hand, and begin the work of gathering or gleaning anew." He takes it as God's address to the Chaldeans, in which they are exhorted repeatedly to return and to carry away captives the remaining inhabitants. But this does not comport with the simile of the vintager returning the hand to the baskets. It seems to be a command to put in safe custody those whom they took or gleaned, as a vintager, who, when he plucks a grape or a cluster, puts it safely in a basket to be carried away. The "hand" is put here for what the hand holds—the grapes or clusters. It is then the same as though he had said, "Lay up, as a vintager, what you glean, in baskets." The Jews were gathered, not to be destroyed, but to be carried away into captivity. This seems to have been the intimation here,—

Return thine hand, like a vintager, unto the baskets.

That is, Throw not away what you gather, but let the hand, that is stretched forth to reach the grapes, bring back what it gleans into the baskets. The *Vulgate* is, "Turn (converte) thine hand as a vintager to his basket." The *Septuagint*, "Turn ye (ἐπιστρέψατε) as a vintager to his basket." The *Syriac* is the same with the *Vulgate*, except that it has "gleaning" instead of "basket." The *Arabic* corresponds with the *Septuagint*. The *Targum* has an unintelligible paraphrase.—*Ed.*

which thou didst formerly denounce on them; and may we thus with a pious heart return to thee, that we may find by experience that thou art ever a propitious Father to sinners, whenever with a sincere heart and without dissimulation they return to thee, through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Fourth.

10. To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

10. Ad quem loquar? et quem contestabor ut audiant? Ecce incircumcisa auris eorum, et non poterunt attendere; ecce verbum Jehovæ fuit illis opprobrio? non acquieverunt in eo (*hoc est,* non oblectati sunt; יָחַל *significat capere oblectationem,* Ils n'y ont prins nul plaisir.)

THE Prophet here shews there was no reason for him to labour any longer in trying to reform the people, for he spoke to the deaf. He had said before, according to our lecture yesterday, that God was still ready to be reconciled to the Jews, if they repented; but now, referring to himself, he says that his words were wholly lost. Hence he asks a question as respecting a thing strange or unexpected. *To whom,* he says, *shall I speak? and to whom shall I protest?* He had indeed, as we found yesterday, exhorted the people to repent: but there is nothing inconsistent in all this; for he wished, as far as he could, to secure the safety of the people. Even God had commanded this; and it was his will, as it was yesterday stated, that a testimony should be borne, that it was not his fault, according to what had been taught, that he was not reconciled to the people.

We now then see that the whole passage harmonizes; for Jeremiah performed his office in trying to find out whether the people were healable; but when he saw that such were their obstinacy that it allowed of no remedy, he exclaims as one astonished, *To whom shall I speak? and to whom shall I protest?* The meaning is, that the people were so given up to impiety, that the prophets spent their labour in vain while endeavouring to reform them. And the first clause he confirms by another, *To whom shall I protest?* He intimates that they had despised not only what had been plainly taught

them, but also protestations, which possess much greater power. He means that their wickedness could be cured by no remedies, that they had not only rejected plain truth and serious warnings, but had also perversely resisted solemn protestations.

That they may hear, he says. He intimates, that though he had faithfully performed his office, yet his labour was without any fruit, for all the Jews were deaf. Hence he adds, *Behold, uncircumcised is their ear.* This metaphor is common in the prophets. The uncircumcised ear is that which rejects all true doctrine. An uncircumcised heart is that which is perverse and rebellious. But we ought to understand the reason of this: as circumcision was an evidence of obedience, so the Scripture calls those uncircumcised who are unteachable, who cast away every fear of God and all sense of religion, and follow their own lusts and desires. But to be thus called was greatly disliked by the Jews; for circumcision gave them no common ground of confidence, since it was the symbol and pledge of adoption, and since they knew that they were thereby separated from other nations so as to be called God's holy people. But the Prophet divested them of this vain conceit by calling them uncircumcised in heart and ears, for they had dealt perfidiously with God when they promised to be obedient to his will.

The external sign was of itself nothing, when the end was disregarded. It was God's will to consecrate his ancient people to himself by circumcision: but when they became satisfied with the visible sign only, there was no longer the reality, and God's covenant was profaned. It is the same at this day with respect to baptism; they who wish to be deemed Christians, boast of it, while at the same time they shew no fear of God, and while their whole life obliterates the true character of baptism. It is hence evident, that they are sacrilegious, for they pollute what is holy. And for this reason Paul calls the letter [the outward rite] of circumcision, a sign without the reality. (Rom. ii. 27.) So at this day baptism may be called the letter in all the profane, who have no regard to its design: for God receives us into his Church on the condition that we are the members of Christ,

and that being ruled by his Spirit we renounce the lusts of our flesh. But when we seek under the cloak of baptism to associate God with the Devil, it is a most detestable sacrilege. Such was the stupid presumption of the Jews. This was the reason why the prophets so often charged them with being uncircumcised in hearts and ears: "Ye are God's holy people; give a proof of this: ye indeed boast that you have been circumcised; surely, the cutting off of a small pellicle does not satisfy God; shew that your hearts and ears have been circumcised: but uncircumcision remains in your hearts, and it remains in your ears; ye are then heathens."

We now then see the meaning of the Prophet, and also the reason why Scripture speaks so much of the uncircumcision of the hearts and ears, and it was this,—to prove the Jews guilty of profaning that sign, which ought to have been a pledge of their adoption, and to have served as a profession of a new life.

It was not to lessen their guilt that Jeremiah said, *They could not attend* or give ear. If any one objects and asks, "Ought it to be deemed a crime that they could not attend?" The Prophet, as I have said, did not extenuate their guilt, but on the contrary shewed that they were so sunk in their vices, that they were not masters of themselves; as the case is with a drunkard, who is not in his right mind; but as he has contracted this vice of intemperance, his going astray or his ignorance is in no way excusable. So also the Prophet says, that the Jews could not attend to the word of the Lord, because they had surrendered themselves up to the Devil, so that they were become his slaves; as Paul says of those who were without the grace of God, that they were sold under sin, (Rom. vii. 14;) and the Scripture says elsewhere the same.

In short, Jeremiah here teaches us, that such was the habit of sinning contracted by the Jews, that they were no longer free to do what was right; for the Devil led them here and there at his pleasure, as though they were bound in his chains. And thus he sets forth their depravity as hopeless. Even Aristotle, though he is of no authority as to the power

of the will, for he holds free-will, (he knew nothing of original sin and of the corruption of nature,) yet allows that those who are otherwise wholly free cannot do what is right when they become so hardened in their vices, that intemperance, ἀκράτεια, rules in them: for intemperance is a tyrant, which so subdues all the feelings and senses of men, that all liberty is destroyed. We now then see what the Prophet had in view: he meant not that the Jews sinned, because they had not the power to resist; but because they had so plunged themselves into the abyss of wickedness, that they had sold themselves as it were to the Devil, who held them fast bound, and furiously drove them along as he pleased.

And this we learn more fully from what follows; for he says, *Behold, the word of Jehovah has been to them a reproach; and it has not pleased them,* or they have not delighted in it; for חָפֵץ means to take delight in a thing. The Prophet now more clearly shews, that the fault was in the Jews themselves, because they had despised God. Whence then was the impotence of which he had spoken? Even from their licentiousness, because they deemed God and his prophets as nothing. Since, then, their minds were thus hardened so as impiously to despise the truth, it followed that they could not hear and attend, inasmuch as they were deprived of all right knowledge. Whence was this? Even because they had closed their eyes and deafened their ears, and given themselves up altogether to the Devil, so that he led them into every kind of madness. In short, he shews at the end of the verse what was the beginning of all their evils, even because the *word* of God did not please them, that is, because they had cast aside every care for true religion, because they were not pleased when the prophets came and offered to them the favour of God. As then the truth had become unsavoury to them, so that they rejected it, when it ought to have been especially delightful to them, so it happened that they became wholly stupid and void of all judgment and reason; and hence also came the uncircumcision of the ears of which mention has been made.[1] It follows—

[1] This is a remarkable verse, and shews, as *Calvin* explains, the degraded and corrupt state of the nation in a very striking manner,—

11. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with *him that is* full of days.

11. Ergo indignatione (*vel*, ira) Jehovæ repletus sum (*copula hic ponitur vice illativæ particulæ, nisi adversativè resolvere libeat*, atqui, *vel*, ego autem) et laboravi continendo, ad effundendum super parvulum in compitis (*hoc est*, in publico, foris,) et super consilium juvenum (בחורים *sunt propriè electi, nam* בחר *est eligere; sed ita vocantur juvenes, qui sunt in flore ætatis*) similiter: quoniam etiam vir cum uxore capientur, senex cum pleno dierum.

The prophet here rises higher; for it was not enough simply to set forth the truth to refractory men, but it was necessary to stimulate them even sharply, and sometimes to wound them, for they could not otherwise be roused, so great was their hardness. Hence the Prophet proceeds in the same strain with what we observed yesterday; and he declares that he was *full of the indignation* of God. This may be taken passively and actively,—that the Prophet was indignant with holy zeal, because he undertook the cause of God, —or, that he dreaded the judgment, which the Jews nevertheless in no way heeded. But he speaks here no doubt according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as though he said, that he did not announce what his own mind suggested, but what was dictated by the Spirit of God. This indignation is, in short, to be applied to what was taught, as though he had said, "If I address you with great vehemence, think not that as a man I forget moderation, being influenced by wrath; but the Spirit of God leads and impels me. Whatever indignation then is found in my language, whatever vehemence and sharpness and menacing, all this is from God's Spirit, and not from my own feelings as a man." It was on this account that he says, that he was filled with the indignation of God.

To whom shall I speak,
And protest, so that they will hear?
Behold, uncircumcised is their ear,
So that they cannot hearken;
Behold, the word of Jehovah
Has become to them a reproach,
They delight not in it.

"A reproach" is to be the subject of reproach: the word of God by his prophets was despised and treated with contempt. This was the visible and palpable effect, but the cause was, that they had no delight in it or love for it.

What follows confirms this statement; for he says, that he was *wearied with restraint;* as though he said, that so great was the impulse of God's wrath, that it could not be withheld from breaking out into vehemence. And hence we learn, as I have said, that the Prophet declares no other thing than that he was not moved by his own indignation, or by any feeling of his own nature, but that he of necessity followed where he was led by the hidden influence of God's Spirit, lest what he taught might be despised; for the Jews had long accustomed themselves to use their taunts and to say, that they were not to be frightened like children. That the Jews then might not thus trifle, Jeremiah declares, that he was so *filled* with the *indignation of* God, that he could contain himself no longer, but must denounce on his own kindred what God had committed to his charge. As we shall elsewhere see the same mode of speaking, and in more express terms, I shall proceed without making any farther remarks.

He afterwards says, *I shall pour it out,* &c. He no doubt continues the same subject. He then says, that since he could no longer suppress the vengeance of God, whose herald he was, he would now *pour it out,* and that *upon the children,* he says, *in the streets.* He doubtless means by these words that there was nothing pure among the people, for the very children were involved in the same guilt. Since, then, impiety so prevailed that even children in their tender age were not exempt from it, it was an evidence of a hopeless condition. This is what the Prophet means by saying, that he would pour wrath upon children. Then he adds, *upon the assembly,* &c. The word סוֹד, *sud,* means a congregation, or an assembly; and it means also counsel. But as the Prophet speaks of streets, there seems to be a contrast between streets and counsels, as though he said, that children playing in the streets were without any counsel or understanding: but still I include with them the old and the grown up men, for they are all exposed to God's judgment. He then adds, *the counsel of young men;* for there is more discretion and prudence in young men grown up to maturity. The Hebrews do not call youths of fifteen

בחורים, *bachurim*, but men of full and mature age; and the word is derived from a verb which means to choose. They then who are in the flower of their age are called בחורים, *bachurim*, because they are endued with discretion, and do not play in the streets like children. The Prophet then says, that God's wrath would now be poured forth on children, and also on men grown up to the age of twenty or thirty.

For the husband, he says, *with his wife shall be taken, the aged with the full of days.* Some think that the *full of days* was the decrepit: but by זקן, *zaken*, I understand the aged, and by the full of days, all those already grown into maturity, as those from fifty to eighty may be so called. He means, in short, that no one would be exempt from suffering God's vengeance, as impiety had pervaded all stations, ranks, and ages.[1] It follows—

12. And their houses shall be turned unto others, *with their* fields and wives together: for I

12. Et volventur (*quasi per circuitum, hæc est propria significatio,* vertentur) domus eorum ad alienos, agri et uxores

[1] There are two or three points in this verse differently explained. The fury or indignation of Jehovah has been viewed as the message which the Prophet had to deliver, which strongly expressed God's displeasure. See ch. i. 9, and ch. xx. 9. The verb for pouring forth is either in the imperative or in the infinitive mood. The *Vulgate* and the *Syriac* render it as an imperative; but the *Septuagint*, the *Targum*, and the *Arabic* give it, as in our version, in the future indicative, the first person. *Venema* follows the *Vulgate:* but *Blayney* takes it to be in the imperative mood; which seems most consistent with the whole of the passage. The view of most as to "the old" and "the full of years" is, that the first is mature old age, and that the second is the last stage of life, the age of decrepitude. The full of days is "one," as *Blayney* says, "who has arrived at the full period of human life;" and hence "Abraham, Isaac, David, and Job are said to have died *full of years*, or of days." See Is. lxv. 20. Though the general meaning is given in our version, yet the more literal I conceive to be the following,—

But with the wrath of Jehovah have I been filled;
I am weary of restraining to pour *it* forth
On the child in the street,
And on the assembly of young men also;
Yea, both man and woman shall be taken,
The aged and the full of days.

It is unusual to have two infinitives following one another: but the *Welsh* is capable of expressing the Hebrew literally,—

Blinais ymattal dywallt.

Nothing can express the original more exactly. It is better to say "man and woman," as *Gataker* proposes, than "husband and wife;" for the object is to shew, that all, including every age and both sexes, were to be visited with judgment.—*Ed.*

will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord.

similiter; quia extendam manum meam super habitatores terræ, dicit Jehova.

One kind of vengeance only he mentions,—that the Jews would be deprived of their land, which they thought would ever remain in peace to them. Inasmuch as it had been said, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell," (Ps. cxxxii. 14,) they imagined that they could not be driven out of it: and they entertained the thought, that their dwelling in the land of Canaan was as certain as that of the sun and moon in the heavens. As then they deceived themselves by this foolish confidence, the Prophet says, that there would be a change, that God would transfer their houses to foreign nations.

He then mentions their *fields* and their *wives*. All this seemed incredible to the Jews: but it was necessary to denounce on them so dreadful a vengeance, that they might at length be awaked. And then he subjoins the reason why: *For* God will extend his hand. The Prophet here reprobates their obstinacy, because it made God their enemy; as though he had said, that there was no cause for them to think that the possession of the land would be undisturbed, for God was offended with them. Whence, indeed, did the possession of the land come to them, except from God's gratuitous favour? Now, if God was adverse to them, what hope remained for them? We now, then, see that the Prophet at the end of the verse mentions the cause, that the Jews might know that what he said of the transfer of their houses, lands, and wives to others was not incredible. It follows—

13. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.

13. Quia à parvo eorum usque ad magnum eorum omnis (*vel*, quilibet) concupiscit cupiditatem (*hoc est*, cupidus est lucri, *vel*, addictus avaritiæ;) et à propheta usque ad sacerdotem quilibet operatur mendacium (*hoc est*, fraudulenter agit.)

The Prophet now again declares, that it was nothing strange that God resolved to deal with so much severity with that people, and to execute on them extreme vengeance; for no part was whole and sound, but impiety had pervaded all ranks. It might, indeed, be ascribed to the young, as

well as to the old, for he says, *From the small to the great;* but I prefer to understand the first clause of the poor and the lower orders, and the second of the higher ranks, who excelled in power and wealth among the people. He says, then, that contempt of God and every kind of wickedness prevailed, not only in one part but in the whole community, so that there was no soundness from the head to the soles of the feet. We now, then, perceive what the Prophet means by saying, *From the small to the great.*[1]

And this appears still clearer from the end of the verse, where he says, *From the prophet to the priest.* He amplifies here what he had said of the small and the great. Hence we see, that by the great he understands not those of mature or advanced age, but such as were in dignity and honour, who were in esteem on account of their wealth or of other endowments. So also, on the other hand, he does not call those *small* who were young, but such as were despised, who were of the lowest order, and formed as it were the dregs of society: for as I have said, he amplifies what he had said, by adducing the prophets and the priests. Even though the king and his court were extremely wicked, yet some care for religion ought to have prevailed among the prophets and the priests; there ought at least to have been among them some decency; for they were appointed for the purpose of carrying light for others. As, then, even these were apostates, and had degenerated from the true worship of God, what could have been found among the rest of the people?

We now, then, see that the mouth of the ungodly was here closed, so that they could not expostulate with God or blame his severity, for they had all arrived at the highest pitch of impiety, inasmuch as the prophets and the priests were no less corrupt than the common people.

By saying that all *coveted covetousness,* he refers to frauds and base gain; in that he includes every kind of avaricious-

[1] "From the small of them even to the great," *Septuagint;* "From the less to the greater," *Vulgate;* "From the least of them even to the greatest of them," *Targum, Syriac,* and *Arabic.* The last is the best. The positive degree is often put in Hebrew for the superlative. See Jonah iii. 5.—*Ed.*

ness.[1] By saying that the *priests and the prophets wrought falsehood,* or acted fraudulently, he means the same thing, but in other words, even that there was no integrity in those teachers who ought to have been leaders to the blind: for God had ordained them that they might, as I have said, carry light to all others and shew them the way of salvation. It follows—

14. They have healed also the hurt *of the daughter* of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace.	14. Et sanarunt plagam filiæ populi mei super levitate (*hoc est,* super nihilo, de nihilo,) dicendo, Pax, pax, et non pax.

This is to be applied to the prophets and priests alone; they not only corrupted the people by their bad example, but also shook off every fear of God, and by their impostures and false boasting took away every regard and respect for the teaching of the true prophets. He then says, that they *healed to no purpose,* or with levity or slightness,[2] *the wound*

[1] The words literally are "gaining gain," rendered in Prov. i. 19, and xv. 27, "greedy of gain." The *Septuagint* give only a general idea, "performed unlawful things;" the *Vulgate* has, "given to avarice;" the *Targum,* "gape after riches." The prevailing sin of all ranks was covetousness; and the special sin of the priests and prophets was falsehood: they taught falsely. The verse may be thus rendered,—

For from the least of them to the greatest of them,
His all *is* to gain gain;
And from the prophet to the priest,
His all *is* to act falsely.

"His all" means all his object, or all that he did.—*Ed.*

[2] The words עַל נִקְלָה—"with what is worthless," or base, or contemptible, are rendered, "ἐξουθενοῦντες—regarding as nothing," or despising, by the *Septuagint;* "cum ignominia—with reproach," or contempt, by the *Vulgate* and *Arabic;* "illusione—by illusion," by the *Syriac;* and "with false words," by the *Targum.* The same phrase occurs in ch. viii. 11. The whole verse is there omitted by the *Septuagint;* the *Vulgate* has "ad ignominiam—to reproach;" the *Arabic,* "in jocos—for sport;" the *Syriac,* "nugis—with trifles;" but the *Targum* is the same as here. None give the same version but the last. In the Complutensian Edition, which has this verse in chap. viii. 11, the Greek version is evidently a version of the *Vulgate.*

The idea of "slightly," or "superficially," as rendered by *Blayney,* is not countenanced by any of the foregoing versions, nor can the original words bear this meaning. The word נִקְלָה is found as a Niphal participle, and applied to man, as a despised, contemptible, or worthless being,—1 Sam. xviii. 23; Prov. xii. 9; Is. iii. 5; xvi. 14. But here it refers to the means used for healing, which, according to all the versions, was something contemptible, worthless, useless, and which is afterwards named,

of the people. He says, by way of concession, that they had healed the wounds of the people: but it was no cure, when the evil was increasing. They were like the unskilful, who by rashly applying false remedies, cause inflammation, even when the disease is not serious; or like those who are only bent on easing pain, and cause the increase of the disease within, which is the more dangerous as it is more hidden. This is not to heal, but to kill. But the Prophet, as I have said, concedes to them the work of healing, and then states the issue,—that they were executioners and not physicians. *They have healed,* he says, *the wound of my people:* He takes the words, as it were, from their mouth, "Ye are verily good physicians! for by your flatteries ye have soothed my people: there was need not only of sharp medicine to stimulate and to cause pain, but also of caustics and of amputations; but ye have only applied lenients. This is your way of healing! ye have thus healed the wound of my people, even by plasters and ointments to drive inward the disease; but what has been the effect?"

He then immediately shews what sort of healing it was: It was saying, *Peace, peace.* The evil we know is an old one, common almost to all ages; and no wonder, for no one wishes otherwise than to please himself; and what we observe daily as to the ailments of the body, is the same as to the diseases of the soul. No sick person willingly submits to the advice of his physician, if he prohibits the use of those things which he desires: "What am I then to do? it were better to die than to follow this advice." And then, if the physician bids him to take a bitter dose, he will say, "I would rather a hundred times endure any pain than to drink that draught." And when it comes to bleeding and other more painful operations, as caustics and things of this kind, O the sick man can stand it no longer, and wishes almost any evil to his physicians. What then experience proves to be true as to bodily diseases, is also true, as I have said, as

being no more than saying, Peace, peace, when in fact there was no peace.

> And healed have they the bruise
> Of the daughter of my people with what is worthless,
> Saying, "Peace, peace;" and there was no peace.—*Ed.*

to the vices of the mind. All wish to deceive themselves; and thus it happens that they wish for such prophets as promise them large vintages and an abundant harvest, according to what is said by the Prophet Micah: "Behold," says God, "ye wish to have prophets who will speak to you of rich provisions and of every kind of affluence; and ye do not wish them to prophesy evil; ye would not have them to denounce on you the punishment which you fully deserve." (Micah ii. 11.) As, then, the despisers of God wished to be soothed by flatteries, and reject the best and the most salutary remedies, hence God has from the beginning given loose reins to Satan, and hence impostors have gone forth, whose preaching has been, *Peace, peace;* but to no purpose; for there is nothing real in such healing, for the Lord says, *there is no peace.*

The bolder any one is who professes to heal, if he be unskilful, the more disastrous will be the issue. Hence the Prophet shews that the cause of the extreme calamity of the Jews was, because they were deceived by their own priests and teachers. He does not at the same time, as it has been elsewhere observed, excuse them, as though the whole blame belonged to their false teachers. For how was it that the false prophets thus fascinated them? Even because they knowingly and wilfully destroyed themselves; for they would not receive honest and skilful physicians: it was therefore necessary to give them up to such as killed them. It follows—

15. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

15. An confusi sunt (*vel*, an puduit eos,) quia abominationem patrarunt? etiam non puduit eos (*hoc est*, nihil prorsus in ipsis fuit pudoris) etiam erubescere nescierunt: propterea cadent inter cadentes, in tempore visitationis eorum ruent, inquit Jehova.

Jeremiah turns now his discourse to the whole people. In the last verse he reproved only the priests and the prophets; he now speaks more generally, and says, that they had put off all shame. "Behold," he says, "they are sufficiently proved guilty, their wickedness is manifest, and yet there is no shame. Their disgrace is visible to heaven and earth;

angels and all mortals are witnesses of their corruption; but they have such a meretricious front that they are touched by no sense of shame." He means, in these words, that the wickedness of the people was past all remedy; for they had arrived to that degree of stupor, of which Paul speaks, when he calls those ἀπηλγηκότας, who were obstinate in their vices, who saw no difference between right and wrong, between white and black. (Eph. iv. 19.)

This, then, is what the Prophet means when he says, *Have they been ashamed?* But a question is much more emphatical, than if it was a simple reprobation or affirmation. They have not been even ashamed, he says. In their very shame, they knew not what it was to be touched by any shamefacedness. This may be classed with those reproofs, by which they had not been subdued; as though he had said, "Efforts having been made to expose their effrontery, in not humbling themselves under the hand of God; they *shall therefore fall among the fallen;*" that is, "I will dispute no longer with them, nor contend in words, but will execute on them my judgment." *Fall*, then, *shall they among the fallen;* as though he had said, "I have more than sufficiently denounced war on them: had they been healable it would have availed to their conversion, that they had been so often warned; and still more, that I have so sharply stimulated them to come to me: but I will now no more employ words, on the contrary, I will execute my vengeance, so that the calamity which they have derived may devour them."[1]

[1] The *Syriac* is the only version that puts the first verb in an interrogatory form. "They have been confounded," is the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate;* and similar is the rendering of the *Arabic* and the *Targum*. The verb, taken literally, it being in Huphal, may be rendered, "They have been put to shame," or have been made to be ashamed; that is, they had been exposed to shame; but this shame they felt not, according to what follows. Their previous evils were enough to make them feel ashamed; but they had not that effect: hence entire ruin is denounced on them at the end of the verse. The rendering of the whole is as follows,—

15. Exposed to shame have they been,
Because abomination have they wrought:
Neither with shame are they ashamed,
Nor how to be abashed do they know;
Therefore fall shall they with the fallen;

They shall wholly fall, he says, *in the day of their visitation.* From this second clause we understand more clearly what it is or what he means when he speaks of falling among the fallen, which is, that they should wholly fall, when God would come as it were with a drawn sword to destroy them, having been wearied with giving them so many warnings.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou seekest daily to restore us to thyself, and so arrangest thy word, as now kindly to allure us, and then to reprove us severely, and even to drive us by threatenings,—O grant, that we may not be altogether unteachable; but so rule us by the spirit of meekness, that we may submit ourselves to thee and to thy holy word, and be so terrified by the fear of thy judgment as yet ever to taste of the sweetness of thy mercy, so that we may cleave to thee in Christ thy Son, until we shall at length fully know that thou art our Father, and enjoy the fruit of our adoption in the same Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Fifth.

16. Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein.*

16. Sic dicit Jehova, State super vias, et videte, et inquirite de semitis seculi (*hoc est,* antiquis) quænam via sit recta; et ambulate in ea, ut inveniatis requiem animæ vestræ: et dixerunt, Non ibimus (*vel,* non ambulabimus.)

THE Prophet teaches us here that the fault of the people could not be extenuated as though they had sinned through ignorance; for they had been warned more than necessary by God. The same sentiment is found in Isaiah, "This is

At the time when I shall visit them,
They shall perish, saith Jehovah.

There is no necessity to make this verse and the 12th of chap. viii. the same in every particular, as *Blayney* attempts to do. Both passages are the same in meaning, with a little variety in some of the words. The particle גַּם, repeated, may be rendered by *neither* and *nor.* See Num. xxiii. 5. The verb הִכָּלִם is an infinitive Huphal. It is rendered as an infinitive by the *Vulgate.* "They shall perish," which is according to the *Septuagint,* the *Syriac,* and the *Arabic,* is literally, "They shall be made to stumble."—*Ed.*

your rest; but they would not hear." (Is. xxviii. 12.) But our Prophet more at large condemns the Jews; for God had commanded them to *stand in the ways*, to *look* and to *inquire respecting all the old paths*. He uses a similitude: and we ought not to doubt respecting the way, since it has been shewn to us by the mouth of God. But the impiety of the people is exposed and reproved, because they did not so much as open their eyes, when God shewed them the way and allowed them a free choice: for he introduces God here, not strictly as one who commands, but as one who shews so much indulgence, that the people were free to choose the way they approved and thought best. When God deals so kindly with men, and so condescendingly sets before them what is useful and expedient, it is the basest ingratitude to reject such kindness on God's part.

We now then understand the Prophet's design in saying, that God had commanded them to stand in the ways and to consider what was best to be done. Consider, he says, and *ye shall find rest*, that is, that ye may find rest (for the copulative here denotes the end) *to your souls*.[1] Here the Prophet means, that it remained only with the Jews to secure prosperity and a quiet state; for if they had obeyed the

[1] *Blayney* renders the word for "rest," מרגוע, "restoration;" but his long note is not satisfactory. It is rendered, strangely enough, by the *Septuagint*, "purification—ἁγνισμὸν;" but by the *Vulgate*, "refreshment—refrigerium;" and by the *Syriac* and *Targum*, "rest—requiem;" which seems to be its meaning, especially here, as it stands in contrast with the false peace promised by the false prophets.

The representation is that of travellers, who, when doubtful as to the right road, are to *stand*, that is, to stop, to *look*, and also to *inquire*. There were several old paths before them, but they were to inquire which was the *good way*, and to walk in it. This was what Jehovah by his prophets had exhorted the people to do, who had false prophets among them; but they refused to do so. It is a relation of what God *had* done,—

Thus has Jehovah said,—
"Stand ye by the ways and look,
And ask, as to the paths of old,
Where that *is*, the good way;
And walk ye in it,
And ye shall find rest to your souls:"
But they said, "We will not walk *in it*."

There were many paths of old, or of antiquity, as there are still; but there was one good way, the way of God's word. That the way is old is no proof that it is good. Error's ways are as old as the way of truth.—*Ed.*

counsel of God, rest would have been provided for them: in short, he means, that they were miserable through their own wilfulness; for God had set before them the prospect of a happy condition, but this favour had been despised by them, and wantonly despised, as these words intimate, *And they said, We will not walk* in it.

We see that the people's perverseness is here discovered; because they might have otherwise objected and said, that they had been deceived, and that if they had been in time warned, they would have obeyed good and wise counsels. In order to cut off this handle, Jeremiah says, that they from deliberate wickedness had rejected the rest offered them by God: *they have said, We will not walk* in it. This resolution clearly shews that they obstinately remained in their sins, so that the rest, which was within their reach, was not chosen by them.

This passage contains a valuable truth,—that faith ever brings us peace with God, and that not only because it leads us to acquiesce in God's mercy, and thus, as Paul teaches us, (Rom. v. 1,) produces this as its perpetual fruit; but because the will of God alone is sufficient to appease our minds. Whosoever then embraces from the heart the truth as coming from God, is at peace; for God never suffers his own people to fluctuate while they recumb on him, but shews to them how great stability belongs to his truth. If it was so under the Law and the Prophets, as we have seen from Isaiah, how much more shall we obtain rest under Christ, provided we submit to his word; for he has himself promised it, "Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." And ye shall find rest, he says here, to your souls. This passage then serves to commend this celestial truth, that it avails to pacify consciences, so that there is no perplexity nor doubt. It follows—

17. Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

17. Et constitui super cos speculatores, ut attenderent[1] ad vocem (*hoc est*, clangorem) tubæ: et dixerunt, Non attendemus.

[1] There are several MSS. which have ו before this verb, and such no doubt was the copy of *Calvin*. But all the versions render the verb as an imperative, as no doubt it is.—*Ed.*

This is an explanation of the last verse, yet not simply so ; for the Prophet by a similitude aggravates the obstinacy of the people, who were not only deaf to the Prophet's admonitions, but would not be roused by the sound of the trumpet, nor even attend to it. The sound of the trumpet ought to have penetrated into their minds more than anything else for two reasons,—because it was louder than any voice of man,—and also, because we do not usually hear the trumpet sounding, except when war is at hand, or when there is the fear of war.

We hence see why the Prophet, after having announced his message, mentions the sound of the trumpet ; as though he had said, that not only the prophets were despised, while teaching the people, but that the sound of the trumpet, announcing the approach of war, was not attended to by them. The stupidity of the people, and not only their stupidity, but as I have said, their perverseness also, was more fully proved, than if the Prophet had simply said, that they had resolved not to hear. It now follows—

18. Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them.

18. Propterea audite gentes, et cognosce cœtus quid in ipsis futurum sit.

19. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even* the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

19. Audi, terra, Ecce ego adduco malum (*hoc est*, cladem) super populum hunc, fructum cogitationum ipsorum, qui ad verba mea non fuerunt attenti, et legem meam spreverunt (*ad verbum*, et legem meam spreverunt in ipsa ; *sed non est ambiguus sensus, quòd scilicet vel abjecerint vel spreverint, vel pro nihilo duxerint ; verbum hoc significat rejicere et spernere, significat etiam reprobare ; jam semel hoc usus est Propheta et sæpius utetur.*)

He turns now to address the nations, which had never heard anything of true religion. But the design of the apostrophe was, to make the Jews ashamed of their insensibility and deafness, for more attention and understanding were found among heathen nations. This was surely very great shame : the Jews had been plainly taught by the Law and by the Prophets, God had continued morning and evening to repeat the same things to them, that the nations, who had never heard the prophets and to whom the Law had

not been given, should still be endued with more understanding and judgment than the Jews—this was very shameful and really monstrous. Thus the Prophet's design was to expose their disgraceful conduct by addressing the nations, and saying, *Hear, ye nations.*

Then he says, *Know, thou assembly.* The words used are דעי, *doi*, and עדה, *ode;* and though the letters are inverted, there is yet an alliteration by no means ungraceful. With regard to the meaning, the Prophet shews that he found no disciples among the elect people, for they were like brute beasts or stones or trunks; he therefore turned to address the nations, as he despaired of any fruit to his labours among the Jews: ye *nations*, then, *hear, and know, thou assembly*, (the reference is to any people,) *what shall be to them.* Some interpreters apply this to their vices, and give this version, "What their state is," or, "What atrocious vices prevail and reign among them." But I prefer to apply it to their punishment, though I do not contend for this view, as there is a probability in favour of the other. But the Prophet seems here to send for the nations, that they might be witnesses of the just vengeance of God, because the people's impiety had become irreclaimable. "Hear then what shall be done to them." He had threatened the Jews as he had done before, and as he will often do hereafter; but his design in this place was to reproach them for being so intractable; for he expected that his labours would produce more fruit among the nations than among them.[1]

[1] The version of the *Septuagint* is wholly inconsistent with the drift of the passage. The other ancient versions are materially according to our version. Several MSS. read ורעו for ורעי; and this renders the meaning much better. Then עדה is "testimony" as well as "assembly," which appears here very much without meaning. The two verses would then be as follows,—

18. Therefore hear, ye nations,
And know the testimony which is against them;
19. *Yea*, hear thou earth,—
Behold, I am bringing an evil on this people,
The fruit of their own devices,
Because to my words they have not hearkened;
And my law, they have even rejected it.

The preposition ב is found after the verb, to testify, and is even rendered *to* or *against;* and coming after the substantive, testimony, it ought to be rendered the same.—*Ed.*

He then adds, *Hear, thou earth.* This is general, as though he said, "Hear ye, all the inhabitants of the earth:" *Behold, I am bringing an evil on this people.* He would have directly addressed the Jews, had they ears to hear; but as their vices and contempt of God had made them deaf, it was necessary for him to address the earth. Now, God testifies here that he should not act cruelly in visiting with severity this people, as he would only reward them as they deserved. The sum of what is said then is, that however grievous might be the punishment he would inflict, yet the people could not complain of immoderate rigour, for they should only receive what their works justly deserved. But Jeremiah not only speaks of their works, but he mentions *the fruit of their thoughts;* for they concocted their wickedness within, so that they did not offend God through levity or ignorance. By *thoughts,* then, he means that daily meditation on evil, to which the Jews had habituated themselves. So then their interior wickedness and obstinacy are here set forth.

He afterwards adds, *Because they have not to my words attended, and for nothing have they esteemed my law.* We ever see that the guilt of the Jews was increased by the circumstance, that God had exhorted them by his servants, and that they had rejected all instruction. That they then would not hearken, and that they counted the law and instruction as nothing, made it evident that their sin could not by any pretence be excused; for they knowingly and openly carried on war with God himself, according to what is said of the giants.

We may learn from this passage, that nothing is more abominable in the sight of God than the contempt of divine truth; for his majesty, which shines forth in his word, is thereby trampled under foot; and further, it is an extreme ingratitude in men, when God himself invites them to salvation, wilfully to seek their own ruin and to reject his favour. It is no wonder then that God cannot endure the contempt of his word; by which his majesty, as I have said, is dishonoured, and his goodness, by which he would secure the salvation of men, is treated with the basest ingratitude. He afterwards adds—

20. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt-offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

20. Ad quid hoc mihi thus è Sabeis venit, et calamus bonus e terra longinqua? holocausta vestra non sunt ad beneplacitum (*hoc est*, non placent, neque grata sunt,) et sacrificia vestra non sunt suavia (*aut*, jucunda) mihi.

The Prophet here replies to those hypocrites, who thought that they made an expiation when they had offered incense and sacrifices, as though that was all that was necessary in serving God: and hence we shall hereafter see, that the Temple had become the den of thieves; for when they sedulously offered incense every day and performed other ceremonies, they thought that God was pacified. Thus hypocrites ever mock God with their fopperies and regard God as extremely cruel, when not satisfied with external display. This was a perpetual evil, with which the prophets had to contend: and hence the notion is often found referred to by our Prophet, "I desired not sacrifices; I commanded not your fathers, when I stretched forth my hand to bring them out of Egypt, to offer burnt-offerings to me, but only to obey my voice," (ch. vii. 21, 22.) So we find in other prophets: the Psalmist says, "If I hunger, I will not tell thee," (Ps. l. 12.) It is said also by Micah, "What does God require of thee, but to humble thyself before him? He seeks not thousands of rams nor thousands of oxen from thy herds," (Mic. vi. 7.) And we see at this day, that men cannot be rightly taught, except we carry on war against that external splendour with which they will have God to be satisfied. As then men deceive themselves with such trifles, it is necessary to shew that all those things which hypocrites obtrude on God, without sincerity of heart, are frivolous trumperies. This is the import of what is here taught.

There is, then, no doubt but that the Jews punctually offered their sacrifices, and observed the legal rites. All this might have appeared very commendable; but God gives this answer, *To what purpose does frankincense come to me from the Sabeans, and a sweet cane*[1] (that is, odoriferous)

[1] It is rendered "cinnamon" by the *Septuagint* and *Arabic*, "a sweet smelling reed" by the *Vulgate*, and "an aromatic reed" or cane by the *Syriac* and *Targum*. The literal rendering of the verse is as follows,—

from a far country? Thus the Prophet here anticipates hypocrites, that he might not leave them what they might have objected: for while they spent a large sum of money on their forms of worship, they thought that God was as it were bound to them: and where they also bestowed much labour, they supposed that their toil could not be superfluous or useless. And under the Papacy we observe the same thing: when any one builds a splendid church, and adorns it with gold and silver, and supplies it with rich furniture, and then provides a revenue for saying masses, he thinks that he holds in his hands all the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that he can push in even against the will of God. Similar is the madness of the Papists, when they undertake pilgrimages: when they labour and toil, they think that every step they take must be numbered before God, and that God would be unjust, were he not to approve of what is offered to him with so much trouble. Such was also the conceit of the Jews. As their incense, brought from the Sabeans, that is, from the east, even from Persia, was precious, and cost a considerable sum of money, they wished that this should be deemed a satisfaction for all their sins; and they looked for the same benefit from the cane: as the most odoriferous cane was bought at a high price, they expected that it would be of account before God, and that it would avail to compensate for their punishment. This is the folly which God here treats with contempt. "What are they to me," he says, "your expenses? I indeed count as nothing all that ye spend in buying incense and sweet cane." And then he speaks of the Sabeans and of a far country.

He afterwards adds, *Please me do not your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices are not acceptable.* Under one kind

> 20. For what purpose *is* this *done* to me?
> Incense, from Sheba it comes,
> And the precious reed, from a distant land:
> Your burnt-offerings, *they are* not acceptable,
> And your sacrifices, they are not pleasing to me.

The reed or cane was dried and powdered, and formed a part of the incense. The latter is mentioned first, and then one of its ingredients. Sheba and the distant land are the same. The same order is to be observed in the burnt-offerings and sacrifices; the finished act first, and then the previous act of presenting a sacrifice.—*Ed.*

Jeremiah includes the whole worship according to the law; and yet it had been divinely appointed: this is indeed true, but for another purpose. Fasting does not of itself displease God; but it becomes an abomination to him, when it is thought to be a meritorious work, or when some holiness is connected with it. The same is true as to sacrifices; for they who sought to pacify God by victims robbed Christ of his honour: it was to transfer the favour, which comes from Christ, to a calf or to a goat: and what a sacrilege was this, and how abominable? When, therefore, the Jews set such a high value on their sacrifices, they sought first childishly to trifle with God, as though these were expiations to pacify him; and then to offer burnt-offerings, to slay an animal, for pacifying God, was to change his nature; and lastly, it was, as I have said, to rob Christ of his honour: for expiation is to be sought by no other means than through his blood, by which we are cleansed from every stain through the Holy Spirit, who sprinkles it on our hearts. But when this was attributed to sacrifices, they substituted the victim, or the ram, for Christ, according to what has been stated.

Now there ought to have been in sacrifices the exercise of the duty of repentance: but when they became more and more hardened, and thought that by their ceremonies they obtained a greater license to sin, and that God required no more from them, as though they had settled matters with him, they completely neutralized the design of God: for sacrifices, as it has been already said, had been enjoined for this end,—that they might exercise penitence.

We now then see that this answer given by Jeremiah was not in vain,—that their sacrifices did not please God. There is a severer language used elsewhere,—that God nauseated them, that he was wearied in bearing them, that he was constrained to be troubled with them, while they thus profaned his name. (Is. i. 14.) The meaning here is the same, —that God never required sacrifices for their own sake, but for another end; and also, that all external rites are of themselves mere trumperies and mockeries, nay, a profanation of God's name; so that they could not pacify him, but, on the contrary, provoke his wrath. It follows—

21. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

21. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Ecce pono huic populo offendicula, et offendent (*nam sunt ab eadem radice et nomen et verbum*) patres et filii similiter; vicinus et socius ejus peribunt.

Here God, in plain words, declares what vengeance he would execute on the people. He says first, that he would *lay for them stumblingblocks.* He no doubt compares the judgments which were nigh to nets or traps; for the Jews hoped to escape. He therefore says, that they would be ensnared: "Wherever ye go," he says, "ye shall meet with those nets by which God will catch you: *Fall,* therefore, shall both *fathers and sons, the neighbour and his friend.*"

He means by these words, that however they might conspire together, they would yet be exposed to the same punishment. For when sons follow the examples of their fathers, they think themselves innocent; and also when any one has many associates, he thinks himself safe in his licentiousness. As, then, consent or society hardens the ungodly, so that they fear not the wrath of God, the Prophet on this account includes sons with their fathers, and a neighbour with his friend, as those who were to perish together, and without any difference. The word "stumblingblocks" is indeed metaphorical; but in the next verse the Prophet speaks without a figure, and says—

22. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.

22. Sic dicit Jehovah, Ecce populus veniet è terra Aquilonis, et gens magna excitabitur è lateribus terræ:

23. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they *are* cruel, and have no mercy: their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

23. Arcum et hastam (*alii vertunt,* clypeum) apprehendent; crudeles erunt et non parcent; vox eorum quasi mare tumultuabitur, et super equos ascendent; erunt dispositi sicuti vir ad prœlium, super te, filia Sion.

It was no useless repetition when the Prophet said so often that *God said.* He might have said only, "Behold, a nation shall come from the north;" but he premises by saying that he derived this message from God, and not only so, but he introduces God as the speaker, that his message might be more impressive. In the former verse he had also said, *Thus saith Jehovah,* and elsewhere: but he now repeats the same

words, that the holy name of God might more powerfully rouse their minds.

Behold, he says, *a people shall come from the land of the north.* For forty years Jeremiah ceased not to proclaim war against the Jews, and also openly to name their enemies: we yet see that so much preaching was without fruit. This was dreadful indeed: but we may thus see, as it were in a mirror, how great is our hardness and stupor, and how great is our fury and madness against God. He then designates here the Chaldeans as a *northern nation,* and says that it was a *great nation:* and yet he shews, that the Chaldeans would not of themselves come; it *shall be roused,* he says. This act is to be applied to God; for though ambition and avarice impelled the Chaldeans to lay waste nations and lands far and wide, yet that war was carried on under the guidance of God himself: he armed and impelled the Chaldeans, and used them as the scourges of his wrath. We may learn this from the verb יעור, *iour,* "shall be roused;" and he says, *from the sides of the earth,*[1] for they came from a distant country. But the Prophet means, that there would be nothing to hinder the Chaldeans from entering Judea, and from destroying and putting to flight the people, and from demolishing the city and the temple.

He adds other particulars, in order more fully to render the Chaldeans objects of dread: *They shall lay hold,* he says, *on the bow and the lance.* They who render the last word shield, do not sufficiently attend to the design of the Prophet. For there is no mention here made of defence; but it is the same as though the Prophet had said, that they would come furnished with bows and spears, that they might shoot at a distance. The word כידון, *kidun,* means a spear and a lance;[2] and it means also a shield: but in this place

[1] The ancient versions render it, "from the end, or ends, or extremities, of the earth."—*Ed.*

[2] It is rendered "a spear," or a lance, by the *Septuagint,* the *Syriac,* and the *Arabic;* but improperly "a shield" by the *Vulgate* and the *Targum.* It is not true that it ever means a shield. It was a short spear or javelin. "It is evident," says *Parkhurst,* "that this word signifies neither the larger spear nor the shield, because it is distinguished from both. See 1 Sam. xvii. 6; xli. 45; Job xxxix. 23."—*Ed.*

the Prophet, I doubt not, means a spear; as though he had said, "They will strike at a distance, or near at hand."

He afterwards adds, that they would be *cruel*, according to what Isaiah says, when he speaks of the Persians and Medes, "They will covet neither gold nor silver," (Is. xiii. 17;) and yet they were a rapacious people. This is indeed true; but the Prophet meant both these things, that as the Persians and Medes were to be the executioners of divine vengeance, they would come with a new disposition and character, despising gold and silver, and other kinds of spoil, and seeking only blood. *And they will shew*, he says, *no mercy;* and then he adds, *their voice shall make an uproar*, or sound, *like the sea.* He touches, I have no doubt, on the stupor of the people in not attending to the voice of God; for the teaching of Jeremiah had for many years sounded in their ears: Isaiah and others had preceded him; but the people had continued deaf. He says now, "Ye shall hereafter hear other teachers; they will not warn you, nor give you counsel, nor be satisfied with reproofs and threatenings, but they will come like a tempest on the sea; *their voice shall make an uproar.*"

He adds, *Ascend shall they on horses,*[1] *and be set in order as a man for war;* that is, "Thou, Jerusalem, shalt find that thou wilt have to do with military men." The Prophet means, in short, that the Jews most foolishly trusted in their own strength, and thus heedlessly despised the threatenings of the prophets. But as their security was of this kind, he says that they would at length really find out how stupid they had been, for the Chaldeans would come with dreadful violence, prepared for war—against whom? *Against*

[1] Literally it is, "And on horses shall they ride." Then the following line is, referring to the nation in verse 21,—

Set in order *it shall be*, like a man for war,
Against thee, daughter of Sion.

Then the next verse refers to the same, the nation,—

Heard have we the report of it;
Relaxed have become our hands,
Distress has laid hold on us,
The pain like that of one in travail.

The effect is first stated, the relaxation of the hands; then the cause, the distress and anguish they felt.—*Ed.*

thee, he says, *O daughter of Sion.* I cannot proceed further, on account of some other business.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not daily to give thee occasion of offence, and as thou ceasest not, in order to promote our salvation, to call us to the right way,—O grant, that we may be attentive to thy voice, and suffer ourselves to be reproved by it, and so submit ourselves to thee, that we may continually go on towards the mark to which thou invitest us, and that having at length finished our course in this life, we may enjoy the fruit of our obedience and faith, and possess that eternal inheritance which has been obtained for us by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Sixth.

24. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

24. Audivimus famam ejus, dissolutæ sunt manus nostræ, angustia apprehendit nos, dolor tanquam parturientis.

JEREMIAH proceeds in the same strain; for he sets before the eyes of the Jews the judgment of God, and draws them, as it were against their will, into the middle of the scene. And this was done by the prophets, as it has been already said, because by plain words they could not move the hearts of the people on account of their contempt of God, and of the long obduracy in which they had settled. Hence he says, that *heard* had been the *report* of the enemy, and that immediately *dissolved* had their *hands.* When the Prophet spoke, the Jews did not think that their enemies were so near. But the phrase is to be thus explained: "As soon as ye shall hear the report, your hands shall be relaxed, and lay hold on you shall distress."

The similitude of a woman in travail is often found in Scripture; and what is to be understood in most places is sudden and unexpected pain: but in this place the Prophet refers rather to the violence of pain; though the other meaning, which I have just stated, is not to be excluded; for it is probable, that when he saw that the hardness and obstinacy of the people were so great, he adopted this simili-

tude, in order to shew, that however heedlessly they despised the punishment due to them, it could not yet be avoided, as it would seize them suddenly like that of a woman in child-bearing. He afterwards adds—

25. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy *and* fear *is* on every side.

25. Ne exieritis in agrum, et per iter ne ingrediamini; quia gladius hostis, terror undique (*vel*, in circuitu, מסביב.)

He confirms the previous verse. For the Jews, as it has been said, regarded all threatenings as nothing: it was hence necessary that they should be taught, not by words only, but be constrained to fear, by having the scene set before their eyes, that being thus constrained they might at least entertain some fear on account of the nearness of God's vengeance. The Prophet then denounces war, and speaks as though they were already besieged, *Go ye not forth*, he says, *into the field*, &c., *for the terror of the enemy* and *fear is on every side*;[1] not that the Chaldeans were already laying waste Judea, or that they had even departed from their own country. But we have briefly explained the design of the Prophet: he intended thus vehemently to deal with a hardened and obstinate people, that they might know that he spoke seriously to them, and that his threatenings would not be evanescent. It follows—

26. O daughter of my people, gird *thee* with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

26. Filia populi mei, accingere sacco, voluta te in pulvere, luctum unigeniti fac tibi, planctum amaritudinum; quia repentè veniet vastator super nos.

The Prophet seems to use more words than necessary; for in a clear matter he appears to extend his discourse too far: but we must consider the design which has been mentioned; for he could not rouse the Jews without urging the matter on them with great vehemence. Known and suffi-

[1] This is addressed to the daughter of Sion: hence the verbs are in the singular number. There is no need for the change which *Calvin*, and also *Blayney*, adopt, though countenanced by the *Keri*, and some MSS., for the same is addressed in the next verse,—

Go thou not forth to the field,
And in the way walk not;
For the enemy has a sword,
Terror *is* on every side.

"For the enemy," &c., literally, "For sword *is* to the enemy."—*Ed.*

ciently common is the term, "daughter of my people," as applied to the whole community. *Daughter of my people*, he says, *be thou girded with sackcloth, and roll thyself in the dust.* It is doubtful whether the Prophet exhorts them to repent, or whether he denounces mourning on the irreclaimable and the hopeless; for ashes and sackcloth are often mentioned, when there is no hope of conversion or of repentance. However, if this view be approved, I will not object, that is, that the Prophet still makes the trial, whether the Jews would return to a sane mind.

Make thee a mourning, he says, as for *an only-begotten.* Thus the Hebrews speak of the greatest and bitterest mourning: for when any one loses an only son, he grieves far more for his death than if he had many children; for when some remain, some comfort still remains; but when one is wholly bereaved, a greater grief, as I have said, is felt by parents. For this reason the Hebrews call it a *mourning for an only son*, when things are in a hopeless state. He afterwards adds, *the mourning of bitternesses*, signifying the same thing; *because suddenly shall come upon us the waster.*

If repentance be thought to be intended here, we know that sackcloth and ashes are, of themselves, of no account before God, but that they were formerly evidences of repentance when God's wrath was humbly deprecated; and hence the prophets often designated the thing signified by the sign. We must yet remember what Joel says, that hearts, and not garments, are to be rent. (Joel ii. 13.) But the prophets assume this principle as granted, that we are not to deal falsely with God, but with sincerity. Then by sackcloth and ashes they did not understand false protestations, as it is said, but real manifestations of what they felt, when really and from the heart they sought God's mercy. But as the Prophet seems here to assume the character of a herald, denouncing war, I know not whether repentance is what is here meant. So then I rather understand him as saying, that nothing but extreme mourning remained for the Jews: and hence he says, that destroyers would *suddenly come* upon them; for they had for many years so misused the forbearance of God, that they thought that they could sin with

impunity. As, then, they had long indulged this false confidence, the Prophet made use of this word, "suddenly," פתאם, *petam*. He adds—

27. I have set thee *for* a tower *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

27. Arcem posui te in populo meo, munitionem (*vel*, propagnaculum) ut cognoscas et probes vias ipsorum (viam ipsorum.)

The Prophet says, that he was *set* by God as a *watchtower*, which was also fortified, that he might observe the wickedness of the people. In order to gain more authority for his prophecy, he introduces God as the speaker. He had spoken hitherto in his own person; but now God himself comes forth, and says, *I have made thee a citadel*. *Jerome* renders the last word "probation." The verb בחן, *becken*, means to prove; and Jeremiah uses the verb in this verse, "that thou mayest prove their way." But as the word מבצר, *mebezar*, "fortress," follows, we cannot take the word here otherwise than as meaning a citadel or rampart. I therefore have no doubt but that a citadel for watching is what is meant; as though God had said, that his Prophet was like a watchtower, from which might be seen at one glance whatever was done far and wide: for we cannot see far from a plain, but they who are located high can see to a great distance.

But the word *fortress* is also added: for it behoved Jeremiah to watch without fear, and not to be exposed to the threats, calumnies, or clamours of the people. Jeremiah intimates that two things are required in God's servants, even knowledge and undaunted courage; for it was not enough for the prophets to see clearly what was needful, except they were firmly prepared to discharge their office. Both these things seem to be included, when he says, that he was *set* as a *watchtower*, and also as a *fortress*.

Why was he thus set? *That thou mayest know*, he says, *and prove their way*. Let us now see what was the intention of this. The Prophet no doubt here claims power and credit to himself, that he might not only freely but authoritatively reprove the people: for objections, we know, were ever in their mouths, that they might be at liberty to despise the Prophet's teaching, as though it did not proceed from God. This then was the reason why God here declares that Jere-

miah was like a citadel, and that a fortified one; he was made so, that he might observe and know the way of the people. Hence it followed, that however obstinately they might defend themselves, it availed them nothing; for Jeremiah was endued with the highest authority, even that which was divine, in order to perform his office of a judge in condemning them: for it immediately follows—

28. They *are* all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: *they are* brass and iron; they *are* all corrupters.

28. Omnes perversi perversorum ambulantes in obtrectatione (*dicemus postea de hac voce;*) æs (*aut*, chalybs, *ut alii vertunt,*) vel ferrum; omnes perditores (*vel*, corruptores) sunt.

The Prophet now shews what he found the Jews to be, whose manners and proceedings he had been commanded to observe. Had he said this at first, either the fury of the people would have been kindled, or his judgment would have been treated with contempt: but when God shewed what he had known through his servant, it had more weight, and then the fury of the people was also repressed, when they understood that it would avail them nothing to fight against God.

He says, that they were *all the apostates of apostates*, or the transgressors of transgressors. Some read סָרֵי, *sari*, with a שׂ, *shin*, and render the words, "the princes of transgressors." But I adopt the first as the more approved reading. They who read "princes," elicit a meaning from the words which appears strange, but not the true one: they say that they were the princes of transgressors, because the people were no better than their rulers, and because servants imitated their masters in all kinds of wickedness. But this, as all must see, is a strained meaning. Why then should anything be changed, since the sentence, as it is, has a most suitable meaning? They are then called the apostates of apostates, or the transgressors of transgressors, סָרֵי סָרִים, *sari sarerim*. The Hebrews, we know, express the superlative degree by doubling the word, as, the heaven of heavens, the holy of holies, the God of gods. He then says, that they were not only wicked, but most wicked, who had reached the extreme point of depravity. For when impiety reaches its summit, then justly may men be called the apostates of

apostates. This, I have no doubt, is what the Prophet means.

He afterwards adds, that they *walked in slander.* The same mode of speaking, if I mistake not, is found in Lev. xix. 16, " Go not," or walk not, " among thy people with slander." Yet this phrase may be otherwise explained, that is, that they walked in calumnies, or that they perverted everything. But in this place, the word slander, seems too feeble, as the Prophet, in my judgment, means more, even the audacity of the people, so that they allowed themselves every liberty in sinning, and thus walked in their own wickedness.

He adds, *Brass and iron.*[1] Many render the words, " Brass mixed with iron ;" that is, that the noble and the vulgar were mingled together, so that there was a common consent among them. Of this meaning I do not wholly disapprove: but as it is rather refined, I know not whether it be well-founded. I therefore prefer to regard this as designating their hardness: They were like brass and iron, for they were inflexible. The Prophet then after having called them transgressors who had alienated themselves from God, and after having said, that they walked in their own depravity, now adds, that they were untameable, not capable of any improvements; and hence he compares them to brass and iron.

He at last adds, that they were *all corrupters.* This, as I think, is to be referred to their habits: for thus are enemies called, who plunder everything, and commit all excesses. But they are corrupters here, who not only like thieves plunder the goods of all, but who are leaders to others in wickedness: so that all things were in confusion, as it is wont to be said, from the head to the feet.[2] He afterwards adds—

[1] " Their impudence resembles brass, and their obstinacy may be compared to iron."—*Lowth.*

[2] This verse and the preceding have been amended, and for the most part conjecturally, by *Blayney,* and though with the approbation of *Horsley,* yet with no satisfactory reasons. That the Prophet was made as it were a fortress, appears from ch. i. 18: and there is here an evident allusion to that, though his being made a watchtower, or a watchman occupying such a place, was for a different purpose. The two verses I thus render,—

27. A watchtower have I given thee among my people,
A fortress, that thou mightest know and try their way:

29. The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away.

29. Exaruit (consumptum est) sufflatorium *vel*, follis) ab igne; integrum plumbum, frustra conflavit conflator (*vel*, excoxit excoctor) quia (*nam copula hic pro causali particula ponitur*, quia) mali non sunt purgati (*vel*, et, *tamen adversativè*, non sunt consumpti; *uterque sensus non malè quadrabit.*)

He says, that the *bellows* was consumed by *the fire* and without any advantage. The whole sentence is metaphorical. Interpreters refer it simply to what was taught; and hence they consider the mouth of the Prophet to be the bellows, by which the fire was kindled. So the meaning would be,—that the Prophet was as it were burnt, through his incessant crying, like the bellows, which by being continually used is at length consumed, especially when the fire burns fiercely. They then suppose that the Prophet complains that his throat had dried up, like the bellows, which being burnt by the fire can no longer do its work. But what if we refer this to the punishments and judgments by which God had chastised his people, and yet without benefit? For so he complains in the first chapter of Isaiah, and in other places. "In vain," he says, "have I chastised thee:" and Jeremiah

Then we are told what he had found them to be,—

All of them *are* the apostates of apostates,
Companions of the slanderer;
Brass and iron *are* all of them,
Corrupted *are* they.

"The apostates of apostates," mean thorough, confirmed apostates, as "servant of servants" means the basest: "companions," &c., is literally, "Walkers with," &c. "All of them," clearly belong to "Brass and iron," as "they" follows "corrupted." The ancient versions are not satisfactory, and the *Targum* is paraphrastic; but they give the general meaning. "Prover" or "examiner" is what the versions give for "watchtower." "Fortress" is omitted in the *Septuagint*, the *Arabic*, and the *Targum*, and is rendered "strong" by the *Vulgate*. "The apostates" is left out by the *Septuagint* and the *Arabic*, and is rendered "princes" by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and the *Targum*. For "companions of the slanderer," the *Septuagint* and *Arabic* have "walking perversely—σκολιῶς;" the *Syriac* and *Targum*, "walking with guile—cum dolo;" and the *Vulgate*, "walking fraudulently—fraudulenter." The word רכיל, "slanderer," is found in five other places, Lev. xix. 16; Prov. xi. 13; xx. 19; Jer. ix. 4; Ezek. xxii. 9. In the first three passages it is rendered in our version "a talebearer," but more correctly, a slanderbearer, or, as *Parkhurst* renders it, "a trader in slander." It does not mean "a sharper," as *Blayney* thinks. The passages in Proverbs are inconsistent with such an idea. There is no passage where it may not be rendered "a slanderer," except Ezek. xxii. 9; where it evidently means "slander."—*Ed.*

has before said, "In vain have I chastised my children; they have not received correction." (Ch. ii. 30.) So also it is said by Isaiah, "Alas! vengeance must I take on my enemies," (Is. i. 24:) but to what purpose? He afterwards adds, that it was without any benefit, because their wickedness was incurable.

The first meaning, however, is not to be rejected, for it was not unsuitable to say, that the tongue of the Prophet was worn out with constant crying, that his throat was nearly dried up. But I approve more of what I have just stated. Let each make his own choice. If we consider prophetic teaching to be here intended, we may also draw another meaning,—that the Prophet's mouth was consumed by God's terrors; for it was like burning, whenever God threatened the people with final destruction. The Prophet then does not without reason say, that his throat was burnt by fire, even the threatenings of God.

He afterwards adds, that *the lead was entire.* This sentence rather favours the view, that Jeremiah is speaking of the judgments by which God sought to humble the people and to lead them to repéntance; for it cannot be suitably applied to doctrine or teaching, that the lead was unmixt. By lead I understand dross. Some consider it to be silver, and say that lead was mixed with silver, in order that the silver might more easily be melted. As I am not skilful in that art, I cannot say whether this is done or not. But the Prophet says that the lead was unmixt; that is, that nothing was found but dross and filth.

He then adds, *In vain has the melter melted, for evils have not been purged away;* that is, the dross had not been removed so as to leave behind the pure metal. He means, in short, that there was nothing but dross and filth in the people, and not a particle of pure silver. It hence followed, that they had been as it were in vain melted. Now, this applies more fitly to punishment than to teaching, as all must see. I hence do not doubt but that the Prophet shews here, that the Jews were not only wicked and apostates and despisers of God, but were also so obstinate that God had often tried in vain to purify them. And it is a kind of

speaking, we know, which occurs often in the prophets and throughout Scripture, that God is said to melt, to purge, to refine men, when he chastises them. But the Prophet says that there was only filth in that people, that lead was found, and that they were not melted. And hence we learn how great was their hardness: though they were tried by fire, they yet melted not, but continued in their perverseness.[1] He afterwards adds—

30. Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

30. Argentum reprobatum (contemptibile) vocarunt[2] ipsos (*hoc est*, vocabunt:) quia sprevit (*vel*, reprobavit) ipsos Jehova.

Jeremiah concludes his subject by saying,—that if the Jews had been cast a hundred times into the furnace, they would not be improved, as they would never become softened on account of their hopeless obstinacy. He uses the word silver, by way of concession; for they were not worthy of that name, and we have already seen that there was nothing soft or tender in them.

But the prophets often conceded some things to hypocrites; yet not without some appearance of a taunt, as the case seems to be here. The Jews wished to be regarded as silver, and to appear as such: "Let them then be silver," that is, "Let them claim the name, by boasting themselves as the holy seed of Abraham; but they are a reprobate silver;" according to what we say, *Faux or, faux argent;* which yet is neither silver nor gold; but the words are used

[1] The true reading of the third word in this verse is מאשׁ תם, according to the *Keri*, many MSS., the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate;* and תם sometimes means "consumed." *Pliny* says that they formerly used lead to separate the dross from the silver, as they use quicksilver now. Then the verse is to be thus rendered,—

Burnt has been the bellows by the fire,
Consumed has been the lead;
In vain *has been* the melting of the melted,
For their evils have not been separated.

They had been in the furnace, but the lead intended to separate the dross from the silver, was consumed, and the melting did not succeed, for their evils, or their vices, were not separated from them. Hence in the next verse they are called reprobate silver.—*Ed.*

[2] The ancient versions, except the *Syriac*, render this in the imperative mood, "vocate—call ye them." So also the *Targum*, and *Blayney* has adopted the same,—

Reprobate silver call ye them,
For reprobated (or, rejected) them has Jehovah.—*Ed.*

not in their strict meaning, and we afterwards shew that what we have so called is not silver. Even so does the Prophet say, "They are silver in their own esteem, and take pride in the title: but they are a *reprobate silver.*" How so? *For Jehovah has rejected them.* He shews that it belongs to God to pronounce sentence on men, and that they gain nothing by their vain flatteries, and by securing some esteem in the world: for God alone is the true judge. The Prophet then shews that the Jews were a reprobate silver, in order that they might know that they in vain gloried, while they boasted themselves to be God's people and heritage. Now follows—

CHAPTER VII.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

2. Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all *ye of* Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord:

3. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

4. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, *are* these.

1. Sermo qui datus fuit Jeremiæ (qui factus fuit ad Jeremiam, qui datus fuit, *ad verbum*) à Jehova, dicendo,

2. Sta in porta domus Jehovæ (*hoc est*, Templum,) et clama illic hunc sermonem (*hoc est*, vociferare hunc sermonem, *vel*, cum clamore prefer,) et dicas, Audite sermonem Jehovæ cunctus Jehudah, qui ingredimini per has portas, ut adoretis Jehovam:

3. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Bonas facite vias vestras et studia vestra, et habitabo vobiscum in hoc loco;

4. Ne confidatis vobis (*hoc est*, ne vobis fiduciam ponatis, *vel*, adjiciatis vobis fiduciam) ad verba mendacii, dicendo, Templum Jehovæ, Templum Jehovæ, Templum Jehovæ sunt.

Here the Prophet gives a short account of the sermon, in which he severely reproved the people, because his labour had been useless, though he had sharply and severely reproved them. He says then, that he had a command from above to *stand at the gate* of the Temple. This was indeed usually done by the prophets: but God seems to have intended that this reproof should be heard by all. He says further, that he was commanded to address the *whole* tribe of *Judah.*

It is hence probable, and what may be easily concluded, that this discourse was delivered on a feast-day, when there was the usual assembly of the people. He could not indeed have made this address on other days; for then the inhabitants of the city only frequented the Temple. But on the feast-days they usually came from the neighbouring towns and from the whole country to celebrate God's rightful worship, which had been prescribed in the law. Since then Jeremiah addressed the whole tribe of Judah, we hence conclude, that he spoke not only to the inhabitants of the city, but also to the whole tribe, which came together to keep the feast-day.

Now the object of his sermon was, to exhort them seriously to repent, if they wished God to be reconciled to them. So the Prophet shews, that God did not regard their sacrifices and external rites, and that this was not the way, as they thought, of appeasing him. For after they had celebrated the feast, every one returned home, as though they all, after having made an expiation, had God propitious to them. The Prophet shews here, that the way of worshipping God was very different, which was to reform their lives.

Make good, he says, *your ways and your doings, then will I dwell in this place.*[1] This promise contains an implied contrast; for the Prophet intimates, that the people would not long survive, unless they sought in another way to pacify God. "I will dwell," he seems to say,—in this place, when your life is changed." It then follows on the other hand, "God will drive you into exile, except you change your life: in vain then do you seek a quiet and happy state through offering your sacrifices. God indeed esteems as nothing this external worship, except it be preceded by inward sincerity, unless integrity of life accompanies your profession." This is one thing.

[1] Though the ancient versions, except the *Vulgate*, render the verb to dwell, as an Hiphil, "cause to dwell," as in our version, yet *Blayney*, as well as *Calvin*, follows the *Vulgate*, "And I will dwell with you in this place;" which seems more accordant with the context. Their boast was that God was dwelling with them, as the temple was his temple. Then when Shiloh, in verse 12, is referred to, God says that he set his name there: and no doubt the same thing is meant here.—*Ed.*

Then the Prophet comes closer to them when he says, *Trust ye not in words of falsehood.* For had not this been expressly said, the Jews might, according to their usual way, have found out some evasion: "Have we then lost all our labour in celebrating our festivals with so much diligence, in leaving our homes and families to present ourselves before God? We have spared no expense, we have brought sacrifices and spent our money; and is all this of no value before God?" For hypocrites always magnify their trumperies, as we find in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, where they expostulated with God, as though he were unkind to them, "We have from day to day sought the Lord." To this the Lord answered, "In vain ye seek me from day to day and search for my ways." Hence the Lord disregarded that diligence with which hypocrites sought to render him propitious without real sincerity of heart. It is for the same purpose that the Prophet now adds, *Trust ye not,* &c. It is an anticipation in order to prevent them from making their usual objection, "What then? Has the Temple been built in vain?" But he says, "Is not God worshipped here in vain? They are *words of falsehood,* when religious sincerity is absent."

We hence see that external rites are here repudiated, when men seek in a false way to gain favour before God, and seek to redeem their sins by false compensations, while yet their hearts continue perverse. This truth might be enlarged upon, but as it often occurs in the prophets, I only notice it shortly. It is enough to regard the main point,—that while the Jews were satisfied with the Temple, the ceremonies and the sacrifices, they were self-deceivers, for their boasting was fallacious: "the words of falsehood" are to be taken as meaning that false and vain glorying in which the Jews indulged, while they sought to ward off God's vengeance by external rites, and at the same time made no effort to return into favour by ameliorating their life.

With regard to the expressions *The Temple,* &c., some explain them thus,—they were "words of falsehood," when they said that they came to the Temple; and so the supplement is, "when they said that they came," for the pronoun

demonstrative is plural.[1] Hence they understand this of the people; not that the Jews called themselves the Temple of God, but that they boasted that they came to the Temple and there worshipped God. But I rather agree with others, who explain this of the three parts of the Temple. There was, we know, the court, then the Temple, and, lastly, the interior part, the Holy of holies, where was the Ark of the Covenant. The prophets often speak of the Temple only; but when they spoke distinctly of the form of the Temple, they mentioned the court, as I have said, where the people usually offered their sacrifices, and then the holy place, into which the priests entered alone; and, lastly, the secret place, which was more hidden, and was called the Holy of holies. It seems then that this passage of the Prophet is to be understood as meaning that the people said that the court, the Temple, and the interior part, were the Temples of God, as though they had a triple Temple.

But we must observe the design of the Prophet, which interpreters have omitted. The Prophet then made this repetition especially, because the Temple was as it were a triple defence to hypocrites, like a city, which, when sur-

[1] The difficulty in the construction is removed by *Blayney*, who renders דברי as a participle, as it is in some other places, Ps. v. 6: xxxviii. 3; lxiii. 11. His version is,—

Trust ye not in those who speak falsehood, saying,—
The Temple of Jehovah, the Temple of Jehovah,
The Temple of Jehovah, are these.

The *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*, have "the Temple of the Lord" only twice, and the verb is in the singular number, "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord it is." The verb is the same in the *Vulgate*, only the words, as in Hebrew, and also in the *Targum*, are repeated thrice. The paraphrase of the latter is rather singular,—"Trust not in the words of the prophets of falsehood, who say, Before the Temple of the Lord ye worship, before the Temple of the Lord ye sacrifice, before the Temple of the Lord ye offer praise; three times a year ye appear before him."

"These" mean, as *Gataker* thinks, these places or buildings; and *Lowth* and *Blayney* think the same. The repetition seems to denote the frequency with which the Jews used the words: they continually boasted of having God's Temple among them. "The Prophet," says *Henry*, "repeats it, because they repeated it upon all occasions. It was the cant of the times. If they heard an awakening sermon, they lulled themselves asleep again with this, "We cannot but do well, for we have the Temple of the Lord among us." It is common for those that are farthest from God to boast themselves most of their being near to the Church."—*Ed.*

rounded, not by one, but by three walls, is deemed impregnable. Since, then, the Jews exalted their Temple, consisting of three parts, it was the same as they set up a triple wall or a triple rampart against God's judgments! "We are invincible; how can enemies come to us? how can any calamity reach us? God dwells in the midst of us, and here he has his habitation, and not one and single fort, but a triple fort; he has his court, his Temple, and his Holy of holies." We now then understand why the Prophet made this repetition, and used also the plural number.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we so abuse thy forbearance, that thou art constrained by our depravity to deal sharply with us,—O grant, that we may not be also hardened against thy chastisements, but may we with a submissive and tractable neck learn to take thy yoke, and be so obedient to thy government, that we may testify our repentance, not for one day only, and give no fallacious evidence, but that we may really prove through the whole course of our life the sincerity of our conversion to thee, by regarding this as our main object, even to glorify thee in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Seventh.

5. For if ye throughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;

6. *If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt;

7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

5. Certè si bonas faciendo bonas feceritis vias vestras (bonificando bonificaveritis, *ad verbum, si ita vertere liceret*) et studia vestra; si faciendo feceritis judicium inter virum et inter proximum ejus;

6. Peregrinum, pupillum et viduam non oppresseritis; et sanguinem innoxium non effuderitis in hoc loco; et post deos alienos non ambulaveritis in malum vobis (in malum vestrum;)

7. Tunc habitare faciam vos in hoc loco, in terra quam dedi patribus vestris, à seculo usque in seculum.

INTERPRETERS do not agree as to the meaning of this passage. Some render כִּי אִם, *ki am*, "But rather," or, "But." I indeed allow that it is so taken in many places; but they are mistaken who read כִּי אִם, *ki am*, as one word; for the

Prophet, on the contrary, repeats what he had said, and that is, that God would not be propitious to the Jews except their life proved that they had really repented. The words are sometimes taken as one in Hebrew, and mean "but;" yet in other places they are often taken as separate words, as we found in the second chapter, "Though thou washest thyself with nitre;" and for the sake of emphasis the particle "surely," is put before "though." But in this place the Prophet simply means, that the Jews were deceived in seeking to prescribe a law for God according to their own will, as it belongs only to him either to approve or to reject their works. And this meaning is confirmed by the latter part of the verse, for we read not there כִּי אִם, *ki am*, but אִם, *am*; "If by doing ye shall do judgment;" and then in the same form he adds, "If ye will not oppress the stranger, the orphan, and the widow;" and at last he adds, "Then (a copulative I allow is here, but it is to be taken as an adverb) I will make you to dwell in this place."

The purport of the whole is,—that sacrifices are of no importance or value before God, unless those who offer them wholly devote themselves to God with a sincere heart. The Jews sought to bind God as it were by their own laws: he shews that he was thus impiously put under restraint. He therefore lays down a condition, as though he had said, "It belongs to me to prescribe to you what is right. Away, then, with your ceremonies, by which ye think to expiate your sins; for I regard them not, and esteem them as nothing." What then is to be done? He now shews then, "If you will rightly order your life, ye shall dwell in this place."

For yesterday the Prophet exhorted the people to repent; and he employed the sentiment which he now repeats. He commanded the people to come to God with an upright and pure mind; he afterwards added another sentence, "Trust not in words of falsehood, saying, The Temple of the Lord," &c. He now again repeats what he had said, "If ye will make your ways good." He shews now more clearly that no wrong was done to the people when God repudiated their ceremonies; for he required a pure heart, and external rites without repentance are vain and useless. This then is what

the Prophet had in view: "Though God seems to treat you with great severity, he yet promises to be kind to you, if you order your lives according to his law: is this unjust? Can the condition which is proposed to you by God be liable to any calumnies, as though God treated you cruelly!" This then is the meaning of the Prophet.

If ye will make good your ways, that is, if your life be amended; *and if ye will do judgment*, &c. He now comes to particulars; and first he addresses the judges, whose duty it was to render to every one his right, to redress injuries, to pronounce what was just and right when any contention arose. *If* then, he says, *ye will do justice between a man and his neighbour*, that is, if your judgments be right, without favour or hatred, and if no bribes lead you from what is right and just, while pronouncing judgment on a case between a man and his brother. Then he adds, *If ye will not oppress the stranger and the orphan and the widow.* This also belonged to the judges: but God no doubt shews here generally, that injustice greatly prevailed among the people, as he condemns the cruelty and perfidy of the judges themselves.

As to strangers and orphans and widows, they are often mentioned; for strangers as well as orphans and widows were almost destitute of protection, and were subject to many wrongs, as though they were exposed as a prey. Hence, whenever a right government is referred to, God mentions strangers and orphans and widows; for it might hence be easily understood of what kind was the public administration of justice; for when others obtain their right, it is no matter of wonder, since they have advocates to defend their cause, and they have also the aid of friends. Thus every one who defends his own cause, obtains at least some portion of his right. But when strangers and orphans and widows are not unjustly dealt with, it is an evidence of real integrity; for we may hence conclude, that there is no respect of persons among the judges. But as this subject has been handled elsewhere, I only touch on it lightly here.

And if ye will not shed, he says, *innocent blood in this place.* Here the Prophet accuses the judges of a more hein-

ous crime, and calls them murderers. They had, however, no doubt some plausible pretences for shedding the blood of the innocent. But the Prophet, speaking here in the name of God and by the dictates of his Spirit, overlooks all these as altogether vain, though the judges might have thought them sufficient excuses. By saying, *in this place*, he shews how foolish was their confidence in boasting of God's worship, sacrifices, and Temple, while yet they had polluted the Temple with their cruel murders.[1]

He then passes to the first table of the law, *If ye will not walk after foreign gods to your evil.* By stating a part for the whole, he condemns every kind of impiety: for what is it to walk after alien gods but to depart from the pure and legitimate worship of the true God and to corrupt it with superstitions? We see then what the Prophet means: he recalls the Jews to the duty of observing the law, that they might thereby give a veritable evidence of their repentance: "Prove," he says, "that you have repented from the heart." He shews how they were to prove this, even by observing the law of God. And, as I have said, he refers to the first Table by stating a part for the whole. As to the second Table, he mentions some particulars which were intended to shew that they violated justice and equity, and also that cruelty and perfidiousness, frauds and rapines, prevailed greatly among them.

Then follows the latter part, *Then I will make you to dwell,*[2] &c. God sets this clause in opposition to the false confidence of the people, as though he had said, "Ye wish me to be propitious to you; but mock me not by offering sacrifices without sincerity of heart, without a devout feeling; be consistent; and think not that I am pacified by you, when ye come to the Temple with empty display, and pollute your sacrifices with impure hands. I therefore do not allow this state of things; but if ye come on the condition of returning into favour with me, then I will make you to dwell in this

[1] What is to be understood by "innocent blood" is not only murder, nor principally; but the offering of innocent infants to Moloch, referred to in the 31st verse of this chapter.—*Ed.*

[2] *Calvin* departs here from his former rendering in verse 3d. The words mean the same, "Then will I dwell with you." So the *Vulgate.*—*Ed.*

place and *in the* land which I gave to your fathers." The last part of the verse, *from age to age*, ought to be connected with the verb, "I will make you to dwell," שכנתי, *shekanti*, "I will make you to dwell from age to age," that is, As your fathers dwelt formerly in this land, so shall you remain quiet in the same, and there shall be to you a peaceable possession; but not in any other place. We must bear in mind the contrast which I noticed yesterday; for he indirectly denounces exile on the Jews, because they had contaminated the land by their vices, and gloried only in their sacrifices. It now follows—

8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

8. Ecce, vos fiduciam adjicitis ad verba mendacii (*vel*, fiduciam vobis ponitis super verbis mendacii,) quæ profectu carent.

He again teaches what we observed yesterday,—that the glorying of the Jews was foolish, while they boasted of the Temple and of their sacrifices to God. He calls their boastings the words of falsehood, as we have explained, because they wholly turned to a contrary end what God had instituted. It was his will that sacrifices should be offered to him in the Temple—to what purpose? To preserve unity of faith among the whole people. And sacrifices, what was their design? To shew the people that they deserved eternal death, and also that they were to flee to God for mercy, there being no other expiation but the blood of Christ. But there was no repentance, they were not sorry for their sins; nay, as we shall presently see, they took liberty to indulge more in them on account of their ceremonies, which yet ought to have been the means of leading them to repentance. They were then the words of falsehood when they separated the signs from their ends. The reality and the sign ought indeed to be distinguished the one from the other; but it is an intolerable divorce, when men lay hold on naked signs and overlook the reality. There was in the sacrifices the reality which I have now mentioned: they were reminded by the spectacle that they were worthy of eternal death; and then, they were to exercise penitence, and thus to flee to God's mercy. As there was no account made of Christ, no care for repentance, no sorrow for sins, no fear of God, no humility, it was an impious separation of what ought to have been united.

We now then more clearly see why the Prophet designates as words of falsehood, that false glorying in which hypocrites indulge, in opposition to God, when they would have him satisfied with naked ceremonies. Hence he adds, that they were words that *could not profit*, as though he had said, "As ye seek to trifle with God, so he will also frustrate your design." It is indeed certain that they dealt dishonestly with God, when they attempted to satisfy his judgment by frigid ceremonies. He therefore shews that a reward was prepared for them; for they would at length find, that no fruit would come from their false dealings. It follows—

9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

10. And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

11. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the Lord.

9. An furari, occidere, adulterium committere, jurare falso (*hoc est*, pejerare) suffitum offerre Baal, ambulare post deos alienos, quos non cognoscitis?

10. Et venientes et stantes coram facie mea in domo hac (*hoc est*, in hoc templo,) super quam (*vel*, super quod) invocatum est nomen meum, dicetis, Liberati sumus ad faciendum (ut faciamus) omnes abominationes istas.

11. An spelunca latronum facta est domus hæc (*vel*, templum hoc,) super quam invocatum est nomen meum, in oculis vestris? Etiam ego ecce video, dicit Jehova.

The meaning seems to be suspended in the first verse, when he says, *Whether to steal, to kill, and to commit adultery*, &c.; but there is nothing ambiguous in the passage. For though there is something abrupt in the words, we yet infer this to be the meaning, "Will you steal," &c.? Verbs in the infinitive mood, we know, are often to be considered as verbs in the future tense: "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, burn incense to Baal," &c.? The Prophet shews how foolishly the Jews sought to make an agreement with God, so that they might with impunity provoke him by their many vices. When they entered the Temple, they thought him to be under a necessity to receive them, as though that was a proper reconciliation. But the Prophet exposes this folly. For what can be more absurd than that God should allow men to commit murders, thefts, and adulteries, with impunity? Hypocrites do not in words express this; but

when they make external ceremonies a sort of expiation, and seek by such means to bury their sins, do they not make God their associate? Do they not make him a partaker, as it were, with them, when they would have him to cover their adulteries? When they take sacrifices from their plunders, to expiate their crimes, do they not make him a participator in their robberies? The Prophet, therefore, plainly condemns hypocrites in this place, because they acted most contumeliously towards God, in implicating him in their own vices, as though he was the associate of thieves, murderers, and adulterers.

Will you steal, he says, and then, *will you kill, commit adultery, and swear falsely?* These four sins are against the Second Table, in which God forbids us to steal, to kill, to commit adultery, and to deceive our neighbours by false swearing. These four vices are mentioned, in order that the Prophet might shew that all the duties of love were wholly disregarded by the Jews. He then adds things which belong to the First Table, even the *offering of incense to Baal,* and the *walking after alien gods,* which yet were unknown to them. By these two clauses he proves their impiety. He mentions one kind of idolatry,—that they offered incense to Baal. The Prophets often refer in the plural number to Baalim, regarded by the Jews as advocates, by whose intercession, as they thought, they gained favour with God; as the case is at this day under the Papacy, whose Baalim are angels and dead men: for they regard them not as gods, but think that by employing these as advocates they conciliate God, and obtain his favour. Such was the superstition which prevailed among the Jews. But the Prophet here includes all idols under the word Baal. There is afterwards a general complaint,—that God was neglected, and that they had perfidiously departed from him, for they *walked after alien gods;* and he exaggerates the crime by saying that they were *unknown.*

The Prophet, no doubt, intimates here a contrast with the sure knowledge, which is the basis of true religion: for God had given evident proofs of his glorious power by many miracles, when the Israelites were redeemed; and he had

afterwards confirmed the same by many blessings; and the law had been proclaimed, accompanied with many signs and wonders. (Ex. xx. 18; Deut. v. 22, 23.) Hence the Jews could not have pleaded involuntary error, for after so many proofs there could have been no excuse on the ground of ignorance. Now, as to alien gods, how came they to know that they were gods? There was no proof, they had no reason to believe them to be so. We hence see how grievously wicked were the Jews; for they had departed from the worship of the true God, who had made himself known to them by many miracles, and who had confirmed the authority of his law, so that it could not be questioned, and they had gone after unknown gods!

The Prophet now adds, *Ye come*, that is, after ye have allowed yourselves to steal, and to murder, and to commit adultery, and to corrupt the whole worship of God,—at last, *Ye come and stand before me in this temple.* God proceeds with the same subject; for it was not only his purpose in this place to condemn the Jews as murderers, and thieves, and adulterers, but he proceeds farther, even to shew their shameless effrontery in coming with an unblushing front and entering the Temple, as though they were the true worshippers of God. "What do you mean," he says, "by this? Ye bring with you murders, and thefts, and adulteries, and abominable filth; ye are contaminated with the most disgraceful things: by and bye ye enter the Temple, and think that you are at liberty to do anything." Similar is the language we find in the first chapter of Isaiah, verses 12 and 15: God complains there that they trod the pavement of his Temple, and brought hands polluted with blood. So also in this place, *Ye come*, he says, intimating his detestation, *and ye stand before me in this Temple.* Though God was not inclosed in that Temple, yet we know that the Ark of the Covenant was the symbol of his presence. Hence, we often meet in the law with this expression, "Ye shall stand before me." Here then, God shews that it was a detestable and monstrous thing, that the Jews dared to rush into his presence, when polluted and contaminated with so many vices.

And he adds, *In this house, on which is called my name,*

that is, which has been dedicated to me; for to call God's name on the Temple, means nothing else, but that the Temple was consecrated to him, so that he was there worshipped. When God is truly worshipped, they who seek him find that he himself is present by his grace and power. As then God had commanded the Temple to be built for him, that he might there be worshipped, he says his name was there called, that is, according to its first and sacred appointment. Absurdly indeed did the Jews call on his name, for there was in them no religion, no piety: but according to God's institution, his name was called upon in the Temple, as he had consecrated it to himself. Hence God reminds them of the first institution, which was holy and ought to have continued inviolable: "Know ye not, that this place has been chosen by me, that my name might be there invoked? Ye stand before me in the holy place, and ye stand polluted; and though polluted, not with one kind of vices, but my whole law has been violated by you, and my Tables despised, ye yet stand!" We hence see the design of the Prophet: for he condemns the effrontery and frowardness of the Jews, because they thus dared to rush into God's presence in all their pollutions.

And ye say, he adds, that is, while standing in the Temple; *ye say, O, we are freed to do all these abominations;* that is, "Ye think that the Temple is a covert for you to hide all your vices; and so ye think, that you have escaped from my hand, as though no account is any more to be made of your sins, my Temple being regarded by you as an asylum, under whose shade ye take shelter." It is indeed certain, that the Jews did not thus speak; for had they been asked whether their life was abominable, they would have denied it to be so. He speaks of the fact itself, and he speaks in the person of God, and according to his command. He therefore condemns hypocrites for thinking themselves freed, because they came to the Temple, and for thinking that all those abominations which he had mentioned, their impiety towards God and their injustice towards their neighbours, would be unpunished.[1]

[1] The three foregoing verses admit of a different construction, though

He afterwards adds, *Is this house, which is called by my name, a den of robbers?* This is the conclusion of the passage, which contains an amplification of their vices. For the Prophet had allowed the Jews to form a judgment, as though he had been discussing an obscure or doubtful subject, "Behold, be ye yourselves judges in your own case; is it right for you to steal, to murder, and to commit adultery? and then to come into this Temple, and to boast that impunity is granted to you as to all your evils?" This indeed ought to have been enough; but as the obstinacy and stupor of the Jews were so great, that they would not have given way without being most fully and in various ways proved guilty, the Prophet adds this sentence, *Is this house, which is called by my name, a den of robbers?* that is, "Have I chosen this place for myself, that ye might worship me, in order that ye might be more licentious than if there was no religion? For what purpose is religion? Is it not that men may by this bridle restrain themselves, that they may not be libertines? For

the general meaning continues the same. It is usual to consider the words in the ninth verse as verbs in the infinitive mood; but they are participles, and stand connected with the previous verse. The *Targum* render them as personal nouns, "thieves, murderers," &c.: but they are in Hebrew in the singular number, the collective singular being often employed in that language. The passage may be thus rendered,—

8. Behold, ye trust in words of falsehood to no profit,—
9. The thief, murderer, and adulterer,
   And the false swearer and incense-burner to Baal,
   And the walker after foreign gods,
   Whom ye have not known;
10. And ye come and stand before me
   In this house, on which is called my name,
   And ye say, "We are freed
   To do all these abominations,"
   or,
   And ye say, "He has made us free
   To do all these abominations."

Blayney, following the *Syriac*, has rendered the words,—

And say, Deliver us, that we may practise all these abominations.

But what is most consistent with the passage is to consider the sentence as declarative, and not as a prayer. They considered themselves freed from guilt when they had offered their sacrifices. They thought themselves then at liberty to be immoral and also to be idolatrous. We might think such a state of blindness and infatuation impossible; but it has existed among those calling themselves Christians, and it exists now. *Gataker* mentions a common saying among ignorant Papists of the same import with what is said here, "We must sin to be shriven, and shriven to sin." The turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness is the same thing.—*Ed.*

surely the worship and fear of God are the directors of equity and justice. Now, would it not be better to have no Temple and no sacrifices, than that men should take more liberty to sin by making their ceremonies as an excuse? Away then with your ceremonies: conscience shews that it is a wretched thing to oppress or injure a neighbour; all are constrained by common sense to own that adultery is a filthy and a detestable thing; and men think the same of rapines and murders. As to superstitions, when they are seen as such, all are constrained to allow the worship of God ought to be preserved in its purity. Well then, had there been no Temple among you, this truth must have been impressed on your minds,—that God ought to be worshipped in purity. Now, because the Temple has been built at Jerusalem, because ye offer sacrifices there, ye are thieves, ye are adulterers, ye are murderers; and ye think that I am in some sort blind, that I am no longer the avenger of so many and of such atrocious evils. A den of robbers then is my house become to you." But this sentence is to be read interrogatively, "Can it be, that this Temple, this sanctuary, is become a den of robbers?"[1]

But we must consider the import of the comparison: Robbers, though they are most audacious and wholly savage, do not yet dare openly to use their sword; they dare not kill helpless men. Why? they fear the punishment allotted to them by the laws; they are cautious. But when they seize on men in some hidden place, then they take more liberty in their robberies; they kill men, and then take their property. We hence see that dens and hidden places have in

[1] It is to be observed that one only of the vices mentioned in verse 9 is here referred to, the first in the catalogue. But as the Temple was the den of thieves, so it was also made the asylum of murderers, adulterers, and of idolaters. It seems then, that the Jews thought that by sacrifices they purchased immunity not only for theft, murder, adultery, false swearing, but also for idolatry, and that having sacrificed they were free to commit all these evils. How unaccountably strange is the conduct of deluded man!

The words "Which is called by my name," are literally, "Which called is my name upon it," an idiomatic mode of speaking, with which the *Welsh* exactly corresponds,—

Yr hwn y gelwir fy enw arno.

The pronoun relative without a preposition is afterwards followed by a pronoun substantive with a preposition prefixed.—*Ed.*

them more safety for robbers. The comparison then is most suitable, when the Prophet says that the Jews made the Temple of God the den of robbers: for had there been no Temple, some integrity might have remained, secured by the common feeling of men. But when they covered their baseness with sacrifices, they thought that they thus escaped all judgment.

And hence, Christ applied this prophecy to his time; for the Jews had even then profaned the Temple. Though they presumptuously and falsely called on God's name, they yet sought the Temple as an asylum for impurity. This folly Christ exposed, as the Prophet had done.

He afterwards adds, *Even I, behold I see, saith Jehovah.* Jeremiah here no doubt touches ironically on the false confidence with which the Jews deceived themselves: for hypocrites seem to themselves to know whatever is necessary. And hence also it is, that as they think themselves to be acute, they are bolder and more presumptuous in contriving deceitful schemes, by which they seek to delude God and men. And hence the Prophet here tauntingly touches them to the quick, by intimating that they wished to make God as it were blind, *Even I, behold I see,* he says. It would not yet be sufficiently evident how emphatical the phrase is, were it not for a similar passage in Is. xxix. 15, "I also am wise." The Prophet had said, "Woe to the crafty and the wise, who have dug pits for themselves." He there condemns ungodly men, who thought that they could somehow by their falsehoods deceive God; which seems to be and is monstrous: and yet it is an evil which commonly prevails among men. For hardly a man in a hundred can be found who does not seek coverings to hide himself from the eyes of God. This is the case especially with courtiers and clever men, who assume to themselves so much clear-sightedness, that God sees nothing in comparison with them. The Lord therefore, by Isaiah, gives this answer, "I also am wise: if ye are wise, allow me at least some portion of wisdom, and think not that I am altogether foolish." So also in this place, "Before my eyes, this house is made a den of robbers;" that is, "If there be any sense in you, does it not appear evident that you have made a den of robbers of my Temple?

and can I be yet blind? If you think that you are very clear-sighted, I also do see, saith the Lord."

We hence see what force there is in the particle גַּם, *gam*, also, and in the pronoun אָנֹכִי, *anoki*, I, and in הִנֵּה, *ene*, behold; for these three words are heaped together, that God might shew that he was not unobservant, when the people so audaciously ran headlong into all kinds of vices, and sought by their falsehoods to cover his eyes, that he might not see anything.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou buildest not at this day a temple among us of wood and stones, and as the fulness of thy Godhead dwells in thine only-begotten Son, and as he by his power fills the whole world, and dwells in the midst of us, and even in us,—O grant, that we may not profane his sanctuary by our vices and sins, but so strive to consecrate ourselves to thy service, that thy name through his name may be continually glorified, until we shall at length be received into that eternal inheritance, where will appear to us openly, and face to face, that glory which we now see in the truth contained in thy gospel.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Eighth.

12. But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

13. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not:

14. Therefore will I do unto *this* house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto

12. Nempe ite nunc (*vel*, agedum) in locum meum, qui erat in Silo, ubi habitare feci nomen meum initio, et videte quid fecerim illic propter malitiam populi mei Israel.

13. Et nunc quia fecistis omnia opera hæc (*id est*, quia imitati estis Israelitas) dicit Jehovah, et loquutus sum ad vos mane surgens, et quum loquerer, non audistis, et inclamarem vos, non respondistis.

14. Faciam igitur domui huic, in qua (super quam) invocatum est nomen meum, de qua vos fiditis (in qua

[1] The verb is in the past tense,—

I also, behold, seen have I, saith Jehovah.

That is, He had seen all they did. If anything be put after "seen," it should be "these things," and not "it;" for the reference is to the particulars before mentioned. See Ps. x. 14; Ezek. viii. 12.—*Ed.*

the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.	vos confiditis, *sequitur postea relativum*) et loco, quem dedi vobis et patribus vestris, sicuti feci Silo.

THE Prophet confirms by an example what he said yesterday,—that the Jews deceived themselves in thinking that they were covered by the shadow of the Temple, while yet they disclosed themselves, and when the whole world were witness of their impious rebellion. He therefore mentions what had before happened. The Ark of the Covenant, as it is well known, had long rested in Shiloh. Now the Temple did not excel in dignity on its own account, but on account of the Ark of the Covenant and the altar. It was indeed splendidly adorned; but the holiness of the Temple was derived from the Ark of the Covenant, the altar, and the sacrifices. This Ark had been in Shiloh.[1] Hence Jeremiah shews how foolish were the Jews in being proud, because they had among them the Ark of the Covenant and the altar, for the first place, where sacrifices had been offered to God, was not preserved in safety. This is the import of the whole.

But he did not in vain say, *Even go to Shiloh.* The כִּי, *ki*, here, though commonly a causal particle, seems to be taken as explanatory. If yet it be viewed only as an affirmative, I do not object, "Well, go to Shiloh." But the language in this case is ironical, "Ye glory in the Temple; forsooth! go to Shiloh." And God calls it his place—*my place,* in order that the Jews might understand that it had nothing superior in itself. The Ark of the Covenant had indeed been removed into Mount Sion, and there God had chosen a perpetual habitation for himself; but the other place was superior as to antiquity. This is the reason why he calls it "my place," and adds, *Where I made my name to dwell,* that is, where I designed the Ark to be: for the Ark of the Covenant and the altar, with all their furniture, were properly the name of God; nor was it by chance that

[1] This was in the tribe of Ephraim, between Bethel and Shechem, Judges xxi. 19, about twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem. The Ark had been there more than 300 years. It did not return there after it was brought forth in the war against the Philistines. The place afterwards declined, and its ruinous state became a proverb. See Joshua xviii. 1; Ps. lxxviii. 60; Jer. xxvi. 6, 9.—*Ed.*

all the tribes had placed the Ark in Shiloh; but it was God's will to be there worshipped for a time. Hence he says, that the place was sacred before Jerusalem; and therefore he says *at the first*, בראשונה, *berashune;* that is, the Shilomites are not only equal with you, but antiquity brings them a greater honour: if then a comparison is made, they excel you as to what is ancient.

See, he says, *what I did to that place for the iniquity of my people Israel.* He calls here Israel his people, not for honour's sake, but that he might again remind the Jews that they were only equal to the Israelites; and yet that it profited all the tribes nothing, that they were wont to assemble there to worship God.[1] For when we reason from example, we must always see that there be no material difference. Jeremiah then shews that the Israelites were equal to the Jews, and that if the Jews claimed a superiority, the claim was neither just nor right, for Israel were also the people of God, inasmuch as it was God's will to fix there the Ark of the Covenant, that sacrifices might be there offered to him; and then antiquity was in its favour, for it was a holy place before it was known that God had chosen Mount Sion as a situation for his Temple.

Hence he draws this conclusion, *Now, then, as ye have done all these works*, that is, as ye have become like the Israelites, *therefore*, &c. But he first amplifies their crime,—that they had not only imitated the wickedness of the twelve tribes, but had also perversely despised all warnings, *I spake to you*, he says, *and rose up early.* By this metaphor he intimates, that he was as solicitous for preserving the kingdom of Judah, as parents are wont to be for the safety of their

[1] *Blayney* thinks that the reference is not to the ruinous condition of Shiloh, immediately subsequent to the time when the Ark was removed thence, but to the devastation occasioned by the captivity of the ten tribes, which was a recent occurrence. His reason is, because they were then directed to go and see the place. But if the place had ever continued in a ruinous state, and was so at that time, there was every propriety in saying, "Go now and see it." Besides, the argument is not so complete, as when its dilapidated state, occasioned by the sins of the people, when the Ark was thence removed, is referred to. "It is probable," says *Henry*, "that the ruins of that once flourishing city were yet remaining: however, they might read the history of it, which ought to affect them as if they saw the place."—*Ed.*

children: for as a father rises early to see what is necessary for his family, so also God says, that he rose early, inasmuch as he had been assiduous in exhorting them. He appropriates to his own person what properly belonged to his prophets: but as he had roused them by his Spirit and employed them in their work, he justly claims to himself whatever he had done by them as his instruments: and it was an exaggeration of their guilt, that they were slothful, nay, stupid, when God sedulously laboured for their safety.

He adds, *I spoke, and ye heard not;* I cried *to you, and ye did not answer.* He inveighs more at large against their hardness; for had he only once warned them, some pretence might have been made; but as God, by rising early every day, laboured to restore them to himself, and as he had not only employed instruction, but also crying, (for by crying he doubtless means exhortations and threatenings, which ought to have produced greater effect upon them,) there appeared in this contumacy the highest degree of mad audacity. The meaning is,—that God had tried all means to restore the Jews to a sound mind, but that they were wholly irreclaimable; for he had called them not only once, but often; and he had also endued his prophets with power to labour strenuously in the discharge of their office: he had not only shewed by them what was useful and necessary, but he had *cried,* that is, had employed greater vehemence, in order to correct their tardiness. Since then God, in using all these means, could effect nothing, what remained for them was miserably to perish, as they wilfully sought their own destruction.

Therefore, he says, *I will do to this house, which is called by my name,* &c. He anticipates, no doubt, all objections, as though he had said, "I know what you will say,—that this place is sacred to God, that his name is invoked here, and that sacrifices are here offered: all these things, he says, are alleged to no purpose, for in Shiloh also was his name invoked, and he dwelt there. Though then ye foolishly trust in this place, it shall not yet escape that judgment which happened to the former place." He adds, *which I gave to you and to your fathers.* Be it so; for this is to be considered as a concession; and at the same time objections are

anticipated, in order that the Jews might understand that it availed them nothing, that God had chosen to build his sanctuary on Mount Sion; for the object was to promote religion. But as the place was converted to a wholly different purpose, and as God's name was there shamefully profaned, he says, "Though I gave this place to you and your fathers, yet nothing better shall be its fate than the fate of Shiloh."[1] It follows—

15. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, *even* the whole seed of Ephraim.

15. Et projiciam vos à facie mea, sicuti projeci omnes fratres vestros, totum semen Ephraim.

He concludes the former verse. The Prophet had indeed sufficiently explained himself; but this confirmation was necessary for a people so refractory. He then alleges nothing new, but only shews that there would be no defence to his own people against God's vengeance any more than to the Israelites: and hence he now calls them their *brethren*, as he had previously said that they were his people; for the state of the ten tribes was the same, until it had pleased God to remove the Ark of the Covenant to Mount Sion, that he might have his throne in the tribe of Judah. All the children of Abraham were indeed equal; but the Israelites were superior in number and in power. And he says, *the whole seed*. This is significantly added; for the Jews had with them only the half of the tribe of Manasse. The ten tribes had perished; in nothing could they exalt themselves; and they were in this respect inferior, because they were

[1] The literal rendering of the two verses is as follows:—

13. And now, as ye have done all these doings, saith Jehovah,
And *as* I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking,
And ye have not hearkened,
And I have called you, and ye have not answered;
14. I will also do to the house,
On which my name is called,
In which ye trust, and to the place,
Which I gave to you and to your fathers,
According to what I did to Shiloh:

"The house" was the Temple, "the place" was the city: both are threatened with destruction. Then he says in the next verse, "And I will cast YOU from my presence." The Temple and the city were to be destroyed like Shiloh; and *they* ("you") were to be dealt with as their brethren, the ten tribes, who had been driven into exile.—*Ed.*

only one tribe and half, and the ten tribes were larger in number.[1]

He calls them the *seed of Ephraim*, because of their first king, and also because that tribe was more illustrious than the other nine tribes. And in the Prophets Ephraim is in many places named for Israel, that is, for that second kingdom, which yet flourished more in wealth and power. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

But we may hence learn this important truth,—that God had never so bound himself to any people or place, that he was not at liberty to inflict punishment on the impiety of those who had despised his favours, or profaned them by their ingratitude and their sins. And this ought to be carefully noticed; for we see that it is an evil as it were innate in us, that we become elated and proud whenever God deals bountifully with us; for we so abuse his favours as to think that more liberty is given us, because God has bestowed on us more than on others. But there is nothing more groundless than this presumption; and yet we become thus insolent whenever God honours us with peculiar favours. Let us therefore bear in mind what is taught here by the Prophet,—that God is ever at liberty to take vengeance on the ungodly and the ungrateful.

Hence also it appears how foolish is the boasting of the Papists; for whenever they bring against us the name of the apostolic throne, they think that God's mouth is closed; they think that all authority is to be taken away from his word. In short, they harden themselves against God, as though they had a legitimate possession, because the gospel had been once preached at Rome, and because that place was the first seat of the Church in Italy as well as in Europe. But God never favoured Rome with such a privilege, nor has he said that his habitation was to be there. If the Pope

[1] This is hardly correct. The reference is to the state of the Jews at that time. The Jews were formed of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. They were joined, after the captivity of Israel, by several of the remnants both of Ephraim and Manasseh, and of the other tribes. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 9.) There is indeed mention made of some from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, coming to worship at Jerusalem in the reign of Asa; but we do not read that they settled there.—*Ed.*

and his adherents had what the Jews then possessed, (which really belonged to Mount Sion,) who could bear their fury, I say not, their pride? But we see what Jeremiah says of Mount Sion, of which yet it had been said, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, because I have chosen it." (Ps. cxxxii. 14.) *Go now*, he says, *to Shiloh*. Now, since Shiloh and Jerusalem, and so many celebrated cities, where the gospel formerly flourished, have been taken away from us, it is not to be doubted, but that a dreadful vengeance and destruction await all those who reject the doctrine of salvation, and despise the treasure of the gospel. Since then God has shewn by so many proofs and examples that he is not bound to any places, how stupid is their madness who seek, through the mere name of an apostolic seat, to subvert all truth and all fear of God, and whatever belongs to true religion. Let us now proceed—

16. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

16. Et tu ne ores pro populo hoc, et ne eleves pro ipsis clamorem et precationem, et ne occurras (intercedas; *est enim translativum verbum, nam* פגע *significat obviam ire, sed accipitur pro intercedere*, ne *ergo* intercedas) apud me, quia non exaudiam te.

God, in order to exonerate his servant from every ill-will, forbids him to pray for the people. This might have been done for the sake of the Prophet, as well as of the whole people; for no doubt Jeremiah regarded the ruin of his own nation with great grief and sorrow: as we shall see elsewhere, he had not divested himself of all human feelings. He was doubtless anxious for the safety of his brethren, and he condoled with the miserable, when he saw that they were already given up to destruction. But God strengthens him, that he might courageously discharge his office; for pity has often melted the hearts of men so as not to be able, as they ought, to perform their office. Jeremiah might have been more tardy or more temperate in denouncing God's vengeance, had not all impediments, which checked his alacrity, been removed. Hence then he is bidden to divest himself of sympathy, so that he might rise above all human feelings, and remember that he was set a judge over the people, or a herald to denounce their final doom. There is yet no doubt but

that God had respect to the people also,—to make it known to them that Jeremiah was constrained to perform his part, however unpleasant it might be to him. Hence, as I have said, he was thus relieved from the charge of ill-will, lest he should exasperate his own nation while treating them with so much severity.

Pray not, he says, *for this people;* and then, *Raise not up a prayer.* Some read, "Take not up a prayer." The verb נשׂא, *nesha,* properly means to raise up. We have spoken of this phrase elsewhere; for there are two different ways of speaking when prayer is the subject. The Scripture sometimes says of the faithful, that they raise up a prayer to God; and thus is set forth their humility, when they come as suppliants, and dare not lift upwards their eyes, like the publican, of whom Christ speaks. (Luke xviii. 13.) We are then said to lift up a prayer to God, when we humbly seek pardon, and stand before him with shame and self-reproach. We are also said, for another reason, to raise up a prayer; for when our hearts sink and ascend not to God in faith, it is certain that our prayers are not real: hence the faithful, on account of the fervour of their desire, are said to raise up their prayers. Even so the meaning is here, *Raise not up for them a cry and a prayer.*

Then he says, *Intercede not, for I will not hear thee.*[1] There is yet no doubt but that the Prophet, as we shall see, continued in his prayers; but still as one knowing that the safety of the city and kingdom would no longer be granted by God: for he might have prayed for two things,—that God would reverse his decree; and this he was forbidden to

[1] There are here *three* things forbidden; their distinctive character is not correctly given in our version nor by *Calvin.* I render the verse thus,—

> And thou, be not an intercessor for this people,
> Nor raise for them a cry and a supplication,
> Nor make an entreaty to me,
> For I will not hear thee.

That is, "Undertake not their cause as one who intercedes or mediates between a judge and a criminal, nor cry suppliantly for mercy, nor entreat me to be favourable to them." He was not to be for them an intercessor, nor a deprecator of evils, nor a solicitor of favours. All the versions render the passage loosely.—*Ed.*

do;—and, that God would be mindful of his covenant in preserving a remnant; and this was done; for the name of the people, though the city and the Temple were destroyed, has never been obliterated. Some people then survived, though without any distinction or renown. And hence at the restoration of the Church God calls its subjects a new people, as in Ps. cii. 19, "A people who shall be created," that is, a new people, "shall praise the Lord," as though he intimated that the Babylonian exile would be the ruin of his ancient people. God has, however, preserved a remnant, as Paul says in Romans, chap. x. and xi. So for the whole body of the people, and for the kingdom, the Prophet was not to pray, because he knew that it was all over with the people. But on this subject we shall speak more at large in another place. It follows—

17. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18. The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

19. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: *do they* not *provoke* themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

17. An non vides tu quid ipsi faciant in urbibus Jehudah et in compitis Jerusalem?

18. Filii colligunt ligna, et patres accendunt ignem, et mulieres ad ponendum ut faciant placentas Reginæ cœlorum, et fundant (libent) libamina diis alienis, ut me provocent ad iram.

19. An me ipsi ad iram provocant, dicit Jehova? an non seipsos ad erubescentiam facierum suarum?

Here God shews first why he ought to be implacable towards the people: for the command to the Prophet not to pray for them seems at the first hearing to be very severe; and it might have been objected and said, "What if they repent? Is there no hope of pardon?" God shews that they were past remedy—How so? He says, *Dost thou not see?* Here he refers the examination of the cause to his servant Jeremiah; as though he had said, "There is no reason for thee to contend with me; open thine own eyes, and consider how they have fallen; for *children gather wood, and fathers kindle the fire,* and *women knead dough.*" Some render the last words, "Women are busy with the paste;" but literally, "they set the dough," *la paste.* God intimates here

shortly, that the whole people were become corrupt, as though they had wickedly conspired together, so that men, women, and children, were all led away into idolatry as by a mad impulse; for he speaks here only of their superstitions. He had before charged them with adulteries, murders, and plunders; but he now condemns them for having wholly profaned God's worship, and at the same time shews the fruit of their impiety—that they all strove to outdo one another by an insane rivalship.

The children, he says, *gather wood.* He ascribes the collecting of wood to the young; for it was a more laborious work. As then that age excels in strength, they collected wood; and *the fathers kindled the fire:* the women, what did they do? They were busy with the meal. Thus no part was neglected. "What then is to be done? and what else can I do, but wholly to cut off a people so wicked?" Then he says, *that they may make* כַּוָּנִים, *cunim*, which is translated "cakes," and this is the most common rendering. Some think that kindling is meant, deriving the word from כוה, *cue*, which means to kindle. But I prefer the opinion of those who derive the word from כון, *cun*, which is to prepare, as cakes are things prepared. I do not then doubt, but that cakes are meant here, as it appears also from other places. The second interpretation I regard as too refined.[1]

With regard to the word לְמֶלֶכֶת, *lamelcath*, many consider the letter א left out, and think that "works" are intended. In this case מ would be a servile: but others consider it a radical, and render the word, "Queen;" which appears to me probable; though I do not wholly reject what some hold that the workmanship of the heavens is here meant. Some understand the stars, others the sun, and others the moon: let every one enjoy his own opinion. However, I think, that if the workmanship of the heavens be meant, the whole celestial host is to be included, as the Scripture thus calls all the stars. But if "the Queen of the heavens" be adopted, then I am inclined to think that the

[1] The ancient versions (the *Arabic* excepted) and the *Targum* render the word, cakes—*placentas*. It is only found elsewhere in chap. xliv. 19. —*Ed.*

moon is intended: and we know how much superstition has ever prevailed among most people as to the worship of the moon. Hence I approve of this meaning. Yet I readily admit that all the stars, not one only, may be here designated, and called the work or the workmanship of the heavens. And the Jews, we know, were very much given to this madness: for as the sun was considered by the orientals as the supreme God, when the Jews became enamoured with this error, they also thought that some high and adorable divinity belonged to the sun: they turned also afterwards to the stars; and this absurdity is often referred to in the Law and also in the Prophets.[1]

It is then added, *That they may pour forth libations to foreign gods, to provoke me to wrath.* When God complains of being provoked, it is the same as though he had said, that the Jews now openly carried on war with him,—"They sin not through ignorance, nor is it unknown to them how much they offend me by these profanations; but it is as it were their object and design to provoke me and to carry on war with me by these acts of impiety."

He then subjoins, *Do they provoke me, and not rather to the shame of their own faces?* God here intimates, that how-

[1] The *Septuagint* render the words here, "the host of heaven," and in chap. xliv. 17 and 19, "the queen of heaven." The *Vulgate* in the three places, renders them "the queen of heaven,"—the *Targum*, "the star of heaven,"—and the *Syriac*, "the army of heaven," in the two first places, but in the last, "the queen of heaven." There are several MSS., in the three places, which insert the א, so as to make the word "work," or workmanship: but this change has evidently arisen from the *Septuagint*. But this word is never used to designate the work of the visible heavens: the word used in that case is מעשה. See Ps. viii. 3; xix. 1; cii. 25; clxiii. 5. Our version and the *Vulgate* are no doubt right. But what is intended by the queen of heaven is not the moon; for the word commonly used for the moon is always masculine, and the word generally used for the sun is commonly feminine. This may appear strange; but so it is. In South Wales the word for sun is always feminine, but in North Wales, masculine.

In Deut. iv. 19, the sun, the moon, and the stars, as constituting the host of heaven, are mentioned together: these the first, as including all the rest, seems to be intended. Instead of "queen," we should say in our language, "the king of the heavens." We do not *read* that the Jews worshipped the moon; but the worship of the sun among them is specifically referred to and mentioned. See 2 Kings xxiii. 11; Ezek. viii. 16. The Israelites adored the sun under the name of Baal, which was the Chemosh of the Moabites, and the Moloch of the Ammonites.—*Ed.*

ever reproachfully the Jews acted towards him, they yet brought no loss to him, for he stood in no need of their worship. Why then does he so severely threaten them? Because he had their sins in view: but yet he shews that he cared not for them nor their sacrifices, for he could without any loss be without them. Hence he says, that they sought their own ruin, and whatever they devised would fall on their own heads. They seek to provoke me; they shall know with whom they have to do." It is like what is said by the Prophet Zechariah, "They shall know whom they have pierced: I indeed continue uninjured; and though they provoke me as much as they can, I yet despise all their wickedness, for they cannot reach me; they can neither hurt me nor take anything from me." But he says, *they provoke themselves*, that is, their fury shall return on their own heads; and hence it shall be, that *their faces* shall be ashamed.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are inclined not only to superstitions, but also to many vices, we may be restrained by thy word: and as thou art pleased daily to remind us of thy benefits, that thou mayest keep us in the practice of true religion,—O grant, that we may not be led astray by the delusions of Satan and by our own vanity, but continue firm and steady in our obedience to thee, and constantly proceed in the course of true piety, so that we may at length partake of its fruit in thy celestial kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Ninth.

20. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man,

20. Propterea sic dicit Dominus Jehova, Ecce ira mea et furor meus (*vel*, excandescentia, *nam verbum hoc significat*) conflata est super locum hunc, super ho-

[1] The verb rendered "provoke," means to disturb, to disquiet, to cause an annoyance, to irritate,—

Is it I they are annoying, saith Jehovah?
Is it not themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?

They were not disturbing, as it were, the repose of God, but their own. They could do no hurt or annoyance to God, but they were annoying and injuring themselves; and this would turn out to their own shame and confusion.—*Ed.*

and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

minem et super animal (brutum; *alii vertunt*, jumentum, bestiam,) super arborem agri, et super fructum terræ; et ardebit, et nullus extinguet.

JEREMIAH proceeds still with the same subject, and explains more at large what we have noticed in the preceding lecture,—that the ruin of Mount Sion and of the Temple was nigh at hand, according to what God had before done to Shiloh, where the Ark had long been kept. But that his threatening might have more weight, he introduced God as the speaker,—

Behold, he says, *my wrath, even mine indignation, has been poured down on this place.* He refers to the metaphor he had before used; and hence is confirmed what I then said,—that God spoke not of prophetic teaching, but of the punishments which he had already inflicted and was prepared to inflict. On this account he says, that *his wrath*, or vengeance (the cause is put for the effect) had been *poured down* on the city Jerusalem, so as to bring destruction on the cattle as well as men, and also on the fruit of the land. It is indeed certain that brute animals, as well as trees and the productions of the earth, were innocent; but as the whole world was created for man and for his benefit, it is nothing strange that God's vengeance should extend to innocent animals and to things not endued with reason: for God does not inflict punishment on brute animals and on the fruits of the earth, except for the purpose of shewing, by extending the symptoms of his wrath to all the elements, how much displeased he is with men. The whole world, we know, bears at this day in some measure the punishment which Adam deserved: and hence Paul says, that all the elements labour in pain, aspiring after a deliverance; and he says also, that all creatures have been subjected to corruption, though not willingly, that is, not through their own fault, but through the sin and transgression of man. (Rom. viii. 20-22.) It is no wonder, then, that God, wishing to terrify men, should daily set before their eyes the various forms of his vengeance as manifested towards animals, as well as trees and the fruits of the earth.

The meaning then is,—that God was so angry, that he

purposed to destroy, not only the Jews, but the land itself, in order that posterity might know how grievously they had sinned, against whom God's just vengeance had thus kindled. There is therefore no need for us curiously to inquire why God shewed his displeasure towards trees and brute animals: for it is enough for us to know that God does not in a strict sense punish brute animals and trees, but that this is done on account of man, that such a sad spectacle may fill them with fear. He afterwards adds—

21. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.

22. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices:

23. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

24. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

21. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Holocausta vestra addite super victimas vestras et comedite carnem.

22. Quia non loquutus sum cum patribus vestris, et non præcepi illis quo die eduxi eos è terra Egypti super verbis (*hoc est*, rationibus, *nam* דבר *propriè significat rationem Latinè; Hebræi enim ita passim usurpant hanc vocem, sicuti Latini rationem*, super rationibus *ergo*) holocaustorum et victimæ:

23. Quin potius (sed כי אם *est adversativa particula, hoc est, hæ duæ voces ponuntur loco adversativæ, sed*) verbum hoc præcepi illis, dicendo, Audite vocem meam, et ero vobis in Deum, et vos eritis mihi in populum, et ambulabitis in omni via (*hoc est*, in tota via) quam mandavero vobis, ut bene sit vobis.

24. Et non audierunt, et non inclinarunt aurem suam, et ambulaverunt in perplexis consiliis (*propriè accipitur in malam partem*) et in pravitate (*vel*, duritia) cordis sui mali, et fuerunt retro, et non ad faciem.

The Prophet here taunts the Jews for being so sedulous in their attention to sacrifices, while they had no care for piety. Hence he says by way of ridicule, "Offer your sacrifices, and accumulate burnt-offerings and victims, and eat flesh." The last clause proves that God regarded as nothing their sacrifices, and that nothing was acceptable to him, though the Jews spent much money and spared no labours. God then shews that all these things were nothing to him; *eat flesh*, he says, which means, "Ye sacrifice to yourselves, not to me." There is here a contrast implied; for when they

did eat flesh, there was the legitimate service of God, provided sacrifices were duly offered; but God here excludes himself, as though he had said, "These things belong not at all to me; for when ye bring sacrifices, your object is to feast: eat, then, and stuff your stomachs; nothing of this belongs to me."[1]

The import of the whole is,—that the feasts which the Jews celebrated were profane, though they pretended the name of God, and wished them to be deemed sacred. *Eat* then *flesh;* that is, "I repudiate your sacrifices; it is to no purpose that ye cover your iniquities by the shadow of the Temple; for your pollutions restrain me from accepting what ye pretend to offer to me." By saying, *Add sacrifices to victims,* he means, that though they sacrificed every animal in the land, it would be all to no purpose; for, as I have said, in offering sacrifices to God their object was to get a feast, inasmuch as they did not regard the right end.

The Prophet therefore adds, *I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day I brought them forth from the land of Egypt, concerning sacrifices or burnt-offerings: but this only I commanded them, to hear my voice, and to walk in all the way which I commanded them.* Jeremiah seems to have condemned sacrifices too much; for we know they were designed for certain purposes: they were intended to promote penitence; for when an animal was killed at the altar, all were reminded that they were guilty of death, which the animals underwent instead of men. Hence God did thereby represent to the Jews, as in a mirror, the dreadful judgment they deserved; and the sacrifices were also living images of Christ; they were sure pledges of that expiation through which men are reconciled to God. Jeremiah

[1] The meaning is not so plain as it might have been made: the burnt-offerings were all consumed by fire; but a part of the peace-offerings and of other offerings was eaten. See Lev. i. 9; and vii. 11-16. Then God says, by way of contempt, "Add your burnt-offerings to your other offerings, and thus you will have your appetites gratified." Some derive the verb rendered "Add," from סָפַף, which means to sweep together; and "collect together—συναγάγετε," is the *Septuagint;* "heap together" is the *Syriac.* This comports better with the contemptuous strain of the passage,—

Your burnt-offerings sweep together
To your sacrifices, and eat flesh.—*Ed.*

then seems here to speak too contemptibly of sacrifices; for they were seals of God's grace, and had been instituted to lead men to repentance. But he speaks according to the ideas of those who had strangely vitiated the worship of God; for the Jews were sedulously attentive to sacrifices, and yet neglected the main things—faith and repentance. Hence the Prophet here repudiates sacrifices, because these false worshippers of God had adulterated them; for they were only intent on external rites, and overlooked their design, and even despised it.

We know that it was God's will from the beginning to be worshipped in a spiritual manner; and he has not changed his nature in our day. As then at this day he approves of no other than a spiritual worship, as He is a Spirit, (John iv. 24;) so also under the Law he was to be worshipped with a sincere heart. Absurdly then did the Jews offer their sacrifices, as though they could thereby appease God: and this is the reason why the prophets inveighed so pointedly against sacrifices. God says that he nauseated them, that he was wearied with them, that his name was thereby polluted, (Is. i. 14:) he says also, that to sacrifice was the same as though one killed a dog, an unclean animal, and as though one killed a man. (Is. lxvi. iii.) "What are your offerings and sacrifices to me?" he says by Amos. Such declarations occur everywhere in the Prophets; we are told that sacrifices were not only of no account before God, but that they were filthy things which he abominated; that is, when the things signified were separated from the signs. This then is the reason why Jeremiah here wholly rejects sacrifices: he complains that God's worship was violated and profaned; and it was so, because the Jews presented to God mere shadows instead of realities.

But still he seems to have exceeded due limits; as he says of God, that he gave no command respecting sacrifices: for before the law was published, God had ordered sacrifices to be offered to him; as, for instance, the passover; for the pascal lamb, as it is well known, was a sacrifice; and he had also spoken of sacrifices before the people were liberated. Moreover, after the law was given, a priesthood was estab-

lished among the people, as Moses clearly shews. Further still, we see with what care regulations have been given as to sacrifices. Why then is it here said, that he spoke nothing respecting sacrifices? Even because God regards not sacrifices in themselves. He therefore makes a distinction between external signs and spiritual worship; for the Jews, as it has been already said, had by their corruptions so subverted what God had instituted, that he would not acknowledge what they did as having been commanded by him. And if we take the words as they are, they are wholly true, —that God had commanded nothing respecting mere sacrifices, or sacrifices for their own sake. This distinction solves every difficulty; that is, that God never delighted in sacrifices themselves, that it was never his will to be served with mere external rites, that burnt-offerings, victims, incense, and things of this kind, were of themselves regarded by him of no value. Since, then, sacrifices did not please God, except on account of the end designed, it remains a clear truth, that God commanded nothing respecting sacrifices: for his design only was to remind the Jews of their sin, and also to shew to them the way of reconciliation. We hence see that God had not from the beginning required mere sacrifices, for he required them for a certain end. It is the same as though we should say at this day, that God regards not fasting. We yet know that fasting is commended to us, but not on account of itself. We now understand the meaning of the Prophet.[1]

[1] This exposition is ingenious and plausible, and all that is said is perfectly true: but it may be doubted whether it be the way to account for the mode of speaking here adopted. It is usual in Scripture, when two things are mentioned, and the one is of little or no importance in comparison with the other, to state the first negatively. "Labour *not*," says our Saviour, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." John vi. 27.

But it may be, that the reference here is specifically to the *day* in which the Israelites were delivered; for on that day, or at that particular time, (for the word *day* is not to be taken in its strict meaning,) obedience to his voice was the only thing which God required. See Exod. xv. 26.

Venema thinks that reference is here made, not to the institution of sacrifices, but to the ground of the covenant. Sacrifices were not the condition of the covenant, but obedience. God did not say, "If you sacrifice to me, I will be your God;" but, "If you obey my voice, I will

Now, this passage contains a very useful doctrine, and which ought the more to be observed by us, as the neglect of it introduces dreadful darkness. They under the Papacy think that God is duly and in the best manner worshipped, when they accumulate many pompous exhibitions of ceremonies; nor can they be persuaded that all this is altogether frivolous. How so? Because they think of God according to their own fancies and disposition. And yet all the Papal ceremonies are the inventions of men: for they derive no authority either from the Law or from the Gospel. And since God has so severely reprobated ceremonies, which yet he had appointed for a purpose which was overlooked, what can be thought at this day of the foolish inventions of men, when there is the same impiety in the people as was formerly in the Jews? For when the Papists perform their trumperies, when the monks and the sacrificing priests fill the churches with their noises, when they practise their childish mummeries, and when they delight themselves with music and incense, they think that God is satisfied, however full of obscenities and filthiness their whole life may be: they are hardened in that false confidence, by which the Jews were inebriated. We ought, therefore, with special care, to notice this doctrine,—that God so approves of spiritual worship, that he esteems all other things as nothing; that is, when unconnected with sincerity of heart.

I spoke not then *to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day I brought them forth from the land of Egypt*, &c. The Prophet calls the attention of the Jews to the first condition of the Church; for though God had made his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yet he then only formed or framed for himself a Church when the Law was promulgated. Hence God at that time shewed what pleased him, and prescribed certain things, which were in future to be inviolably observed: and as the Jews violated the rule given them, the Prophet concludes that God was corruptly and absurdly worshipped by them. This is the reason why he expressly speaks here of the deliverance granted to the

be your God, and you shall be my people." When the law was delivered on Mount Sinai, there was no mention of sacrifices.—*Ed.*

fathers. There follows afterwards a clearer explanation, which removes all ambiguity: for God subordinates sacrifices to obedience. Yet sacrifices are a part of obedience: very true; but as the people were to be subject to the whole law, it hence follows, that the worship of God was mutilated by them, when there was no care for true piety. We now then, no doubt, understand the meaning of the Prophet, and see at the same time the reason why God so expressly rejected sacrifices: for what God has connected, it is not in the power of man to separate. (Matt. xix. 6; Mark x. 9.) This rending of things is impious. As the Jews had separated sacrifices from their right and legitimate end, whatever they did was a sacrilege and a profanation.

That we may now more fully comprehend this doctrine, we must remember this principle—that the basis of true religion is obedience. For unless God shines on us with his word, there is no religion, but only hypocrisy and superstition; as the case is with heathens, who, though they busy themselves much and with great diligence, yet loose all their labour, and uselessly weary themselves, for God has not shewn to them the right way. In short, true religion may always be distinguished from superstition by this mark —If the truth of God guides us, then our religion is true; but if any one follows his own reason, or is led by the opinion and consent of men, he forms for himself superstition; and nothing that he does will please God. This is one thing.

Now, in the second place, let us see what God chiefly requires from those who are his servants. Being fully convinced of this truth—that God cannot be truly served, except we obey his voice, we must consider, as I have said, what God commands us to do. Now, as he is a Spirit, so he demands sincerity of heart. (John iv. 24.) We also know that God so comes to us, that he would have us to trust wholly in his gratuitous goodness, that he would have us to depend altogether on his paternal kindness, that he would have us to call on him, and to offer him the sacrifice of praise. Since, then, God has expressly required these things in his word, it is certain, that all other modes of worship are rejected by him as vitious; that is, when there is no faith, when

there is no prayer and praise: for these hold the first place in true and legitimate worship.

This one passage is sufficient to put an end to all the contentions which are now in the world. For if the Papists admitted that obedience is of more account with God than all sacrifices, (1 Sam. xv. 22,) we might easily agree. They might afterwards debate every article of faith; but there would be in the main an agreement between us, were they to submit simply and unreservedly to the word of God. But we see how pertinaciously they insist on this point—that we are not to stand on God's word, nor acquiesce in it, because there is in it nothing certain. Hence they regard the doctrine of the Fathers, and what they call the perpetual consent of the Catholic Church, as of more value than the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel. They dare not indeed to contend on this ground; and so far they act wisely: for if the disputes between us are capable of being removed, as I have said, by God's word, we could easily overcome them. But while they, fostering their own blindness, strive to extinguish the light, and wilfully envelop themselves in darkness, let us follow what God's Spirit shews to us here,—that the main part of true and right worship and service is to hear God speaking, and to regard obedience of more account than all offerings and sacrifices, according to the passage we have quoted from 1 Sam. xv. 22.

He afterwards adds, *I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people; and ye shall walk in all the way which I shall shew to you, that it may be well with you.* The Prophet confirms what I have already said, that if we would obey God, we must consider what he commands. Now God omits no part of true worship: we shall then never go astray from true religion, if only we render ourselves teachable. Whence then is it, that men diligently labour and profit nothing, except that they are deaf to God's voice? for as it has been already often said, God has not only spoken generally, and in various ways, of obedience, but has clearly and distinctly taught what he approves. Our obedience then will please him, if only we learn what he would have us to do.

And at the same time he adds, that this condition was

mentioned to the Jews, that it *would be well with them*, if they only obeyed God. Hence their perverseness is more fully detected; for they wilfully sought to be miserable, and procured for themselves their own destruction: for a happy life was offered to them, provided only they submitted to God. Since they refused this, who does not see that they wilfully gave themselves up to misery, as though they wished to provoke God's anger, and did so designedly? for it immediately follows—

They hearkened not nor inclined their ear. Here the Prophet shews, that the Jews did not then begin to be rebellious against God and his word; for they imitated the impious contumacy of their fathers: and he dwells on this more at large. He now says, "I gave no command about sacrifices, but only this one thing I required of your fathers, to obey me." *They hearkened not*, he says. What could have been a juster demand than that they should obey God? How great, then, and how base an indignity it was, to reject his authority? Nay, still more, they *inclined not the ear:* for by this phrase the Prophet means not only a contempt of his word and indifference, but their obstinacy and wilfulness, inasmuch as they had hardened themselves against God. Hypocrites do, indeed, sometimes incline the ear, and wish to know what is said, and in some measure consider it: but the Prophet here sets forth as it were the insane contumacy of the Jews, for they *inclined not*, no, not even *the ear* to God speaking to them.

He afterwards adds, that they *walked in their tortuous counsels*, and also, *in the wickedness of their evil heart.*[1] This comparison aggravates their sin,—the Jews preferred to follow their own humour rather than to obey God and his

[1] The words are literally,—

And they walked in the counsels,—
In the resolutions of their evil heart.

They not only *devised* their own ways, but *resolved* to walk in them. They formed their own counsels, and made resolutions to follow them, and they were the counsels and resolutions of a disordered and perverted heart. In rendering the last word "wickedness," *Calvin* has followed the *Vulgate;* and our version, "imagination," is the *Targum.* It is omitted in the *Septuagint*, and "desires" in *Syriac.* See note on chap. iii. 17.—*Ed.*

commands. Had anything been set before them, which might have deceived them and obscured the authority of the law, there would have been some excuse: but when there was nothing to prevent them from obeying the command of God, except that they followed their own foolish imaginations, they were wholly inexcusable. For what excuse could they have made? That they wished to be wiser than God! How great a madness was this, and how diabolical? But the Prophet leaves them nothing but this vain excuse, which doubled their guilt. They thought, no doubt, that their heart was well fitted for the purpose: but he does not here allow them to judge, but distinctly condemns them as they deserved.

We ought to take particular notice of this passage; for the majority of men at this day set up their own fictions against God's word. The Papists indeed pretend antiquity; they say that they have been taught by their ancestors; and at the same time they plead councils and the ordinances of the fathers: but yet there is not one of them, who is not addicted to his own figments, and who does not take the liberty, nay, an unbridled license, to reject whatever he pleases. Moreover, if the origin of the whole Papal worship be considered, it will appear, that those who first devised so many strange superstitions, were only impelled by audacity and presumption, in order that they might trample under foot the word of God. Hence it is, that all things are become corrupt; for they brought in all the strange figments of their own brains. And we see that the Papists at this day are so perversely fixed in their own errors, that they prefer themselves and their own trumperies to God. And the same is the case also with all heretics. What then is to be done? Obedience, as I have said, is to be held as the basis of all true religion. If, then, on the other hand, we wish to render our worship approved by God, let us learn to cast aside whatever is our own, so that his authority may prevail over all our reasons.

Let us further notice how detestable a sacrilege it is, to follow the wickedness of our heart rather than to obey God, when he shews to us, as by the finger, the way of salvation.

Let us also observe, that nothing will then do us good, though we may seem to ourselves to be very wise, and praise ourselves in our folly; for God declares here that our *heart is evil* whenever we turn aside from his pure word.

He says, that they *were behind and not before.* By this phrase he intimates that the Jews turned the back, that they might not look at him or go forward. For when one promises to be our leader to conduct us in the way, we immediately turn our eyes to him; but when we turn our back, it is a proof of our contempt. And thus God complains of his people, that he was despised by them; for they had not only been deaf to the prophetic teaching and admonitions, but had also turned their faces another way, as a proof of a contumacy still worse, so that they forsook him, and as it were bade him to be gone.[1] This is the import of the last sentence. We shall proceed to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast at this day so clearly revealed to us thy will that there can remain no pretence of ignorance, we may on that account submit to thee with a freer and more ready mind, and that we may not only incline our ears to thee, but also so attend to thee with all our hearts, that we may desire no other thing than to make our whole life approved by thee: and as we cannot but turn aside, through our obstinacy and wickedness, from the right way, do thou so enlighten us by the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, that we may strive to embrace whatever thou hast been pleased to prescribe to us in thy word, so that when the course of this life shall be finished, we

[1] The words are,—

And they were for behind, and not for before them;

which seem to mean, that they were bent on turning back to their own ways rather than to go on in the ways of God. The version of the *Septuagint* is, "They were for things behind, and not for things before;" the *Syriac* and *Arabic*, "They retrograded and did not advance," or go forward. The allusion seems not to be, as *Blayney* thinks, to refractory oxen under the yoke; but to those travellers who, when shewn the right way, go back instead of going forward. And this was especially true of the Israelites, who, after having left Egypt, wished often to return, instead of going forward to Canaan. Hence it is said, that they were going back to their old ways, and not going forward in the way which God had pointed out to them. The phrase in chap. ii. 27, is of another kind, and ought not to be confounded with this.—*Ed.*

may at length reach the goal, and partake of the fruit of our obedience, and enjoy that eternal inheritance, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture Thirtieth.

25. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending *them:*

26. Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worse than their fathers.

25. Ab eo die quo egressi sunt patres vestri è terra Egypti usque ad diem hunc misi ad vos omnes servos meos prophetas, quotidie mane surgendo et mittendo:

26. Et non audierunt me, et non inclinaverunt aurem suam; et (*pro* sed) obdurarunt cervicem suam, perversè egerunt præ patribus suis.

God complains of the perverse wickedness of the people,—that he had lost all his labour in endeavouring to lead them to repentance, not only in one age, but that the children succeeded their fathers in their corruptions, and that thus the imitation had become perpetual. This might indeed appear as an extenuation of their fault; they might have pleaded as the Papists at this day do; who have no pretext more specious, than when they bring against us the Fathers and antiquity. But God shews in this place and elsewhere that the children are not excused by the examples of their fathers; but on the contrary, that it is an aggravation of the crime, when men thus harden themselves, and think that a continued indulgence in vices avails them for a precedent; for God does not thus permit himself to be deprived of his own right. This passage then deserves particular notice; for God not only condemned those who were then living and whom Jeremiah addressed, but also connected with them the dead, in order to prove their greater obstinacy, as impiety had been as it were handed down from one age to another.

From the day, he says, *in which your fathers came forth from the land of Egypt unto this day, have I sent to you,* &c. We know how intractable the people had been from the beginning; for they did all they could to reject Moses, the minister of a favour so remarkable and invaluable. And

after their deliverance, they were continually either clamouring against God, or openly contending with Moses and Aaron, or running into gross idolatry, or giving loose reins to their lusts; in short, there was no end to their course of sinning: and yet Moses daily endeavoured to restore them to obedience. It was this great contumacy that God now refers to; and he says, that the Israelites did not then begin to be disobedient, but that they had ever been of such a disposition as not to bear to be corrected, as he will tell us hereafter. It was not necessary here to adduce examples to shew that the people had been indomitable; for this was evident from sacred history. It was enough to remind them, that the hardness and obstinacy of the fathers had descended to their children, so that they might know that they were twofold and treblefold guilty before God, for they had imitated the perverseness which God had before severely punished; nor was it unknown to them how God had brought judgments on their fathers. It was therefore to provoke God most wantonly, when they overlooked and disregarded such dreadful vengeances as he had executed on their progenitors. We shall hereafter see similar declarations; nay, this way of speaking occurs everywhere in the prophets, that is, that their race had been from the beginning perverse and rebellious, and that they had also in all ages despised the favour of God and obstinately resisted the prophets.

But God reminds them here, that from the day they came forth from the land of Egypt he had never ceased to speak to them even to *the time* of Jeremiah: this his perseverance greatly aggravated the sin of the people. Had God spoken only once, it would have been sufficient for their condemnation: but inasmuch as he had borne with their perverse conduct, and never ceased from day to day kindly to call them to himself and to promise them pardon and to offer salvation to them—inasmuch then as God had thus persevered, the more fully discovered was the irreclaimable impiety of the people. We indeed know how dreadful a punishment must await those who dare thus to abuse the forbearance of God and openly to scorn his word, when he invites them a hundred or a thousand times to repentance.

He afterwards adds, that he had *sent all his servants,*[1] &c. In the same sense is to be taken the universal particle, כל, *cal,* "all." Had God sent only one prophet, there would have remained no excuse for the Israelites; but as he had continually sent one after another, to train them up like an army, how great was their madness to despise so large a number? We indeed know that there were never wanting prophets among the people, as Moses had promised in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy. As then God had dealt bountifully with the people, so that prophets had never ceased but continually succeeded one another, hence surely the baseness of their impious obstinacy became more evident; for they had not despised God only for one day, nor disregarded one prophet, or two or three, but resisted all the prophets, though they had been sent in great number. *I sent,* he says, *all my servants.*

Then he adds, *daily.* This is mentioned for the same purpose, even to shew that God had never been wearied, and that they had resisted as it were designedly his goodness, while he was incessant in kindly exhorting them to repentance. He says, *by rising early and sending.* As we have said elsewhere, the verb שכם, *shecam,* properly means to rise early. God here commends the authority of prophetic instruction by ascribing to himself what is done by men. With him, indeed, as we all know, there is no change; hence the expression, *to rise up,* as applied to him, is not

[1] The former part of this verse would better connect with the former verse, than with this sentence. There is the copulative ו, "and," before the verb "sent." The sending of the prophets is mentioned in addition to the first command given to them. The passage may be thus rendered,—

And they went backward and not forward,
25. From the day in which your fathers came forth
From the land of Egypt, to this day:
And I sent to you all my servants the prophets,
Every day rising early and sending;
26. Yet they hearkened not to me,
Nor inclined their ear,
But hardened their neck;
They have been more wicked than their fathers.

Such is the connection in all the ancient versions and in the *Targum.* The verb, rendered "they have been more wicked," or "done worse," is omitted by the *Septuagint* and the *Syriac;* but retained by the *Vulgate* and the *Targum,* and is found wanting in no MS.—*Ed.*

strictly true; but what he commanded his servants to do, he transfers, as we have said, to himself, in order that he might more sharply reprove the ingratitude of the people; as though he had said, that he had been most carefully attentive to secure their salvation, but that they had been torpid and wholly indifferent.

We may hence learn a useful doctrine,—that God rises to invite us, and also to receive us, whenever his word is proclaimed among us, by which he testifies to us his paternal love. God then not only employs men to lead us to himself, but comes forth in a manner himself to meet us, and rises early as one solicitous for our salvation. This commendation of divine truth may be of great benefit to the faithful, and induce them to recumb confidently and with tranquil minds on God's promises; for they are the same as though God himself had spoken them to us. But here is also reproved the impiety of those who slumber and sleep, while God thus watches in order to promote their salvation, and who lend not an ear, when he rises early to come to them in order to draw them to himself.

He afterwards subjoins, *And they hearkened not.* There is here a change of person; for he said in the last verse, "*your* fathers," "I sent to *you*;" but now he says, *They hearkened not, nor inclined their ear.* It is indeed true, that the reference is to the fathers; but in the next verse God includes the people who were then living. There is then no doubt but that it was an evidence of indignation, that he changed the person, and that he was wearied in addressing them, for he saw that he spoke in vain to a stupid people: and this will appear evident from the next verse. *They hearkened not,* he says, *nor inclined their ear.* The words we have already explained: the Jews are here precluded from having any excuse on the ground of error or ignorance; for they had refused to be taught, they would not attend, but on the contrary made deaf their ears. And he says also, that they *hardened their neck;* by which their perverseness is still more fully expressed: they designedly as it were despised God, and carried on war even with his favour and kindness. And he concludes by saying, that they had *done*

worse than their fathers. He had said, "your fathers;" but now, "their fathers." We hence see that the sentence is changed, for God knew that he could produce no effect on them, as we find by what follows—

27. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

27. Et dices illis omnia verba hæc, et non audient te (*vel*, non auscultabunt tibi,) et clamabis ad eos, et non respondebunt tibi.

Here is seen more clearly what I have stated,—that the Jews were not addressed, because they had no ears. Here then God addresses his Prophet and says, "The children will be like their parents: for thou shalt indeed bear the commands which I give thee, but it will be without any advantage; for they *will not hear*, and when thou *callest to them*, they *will not answer*." It was a most grievous trial to the Prophet to know that his words would pass away with the air and produce no good. What was to be expected but that God's wrath would thus be still more kindled against the people? The Prophet then must have had his mind greatly depressed; for he doubtless laboured for the good of his own nation; and we shall hereafter see how sad he was when he understood that their final ruin was at hand. But, as we have said elsewhere, the prophets were influenced by two feelings: for they did not divest themselves of all human affections, inasmuch as they loved their own nation and felt great sorrow, when God declared that he was coming to execute judgment: but this sympathy and sorrow did not prevent them from executing, in a bold manner, and with unshaken zeal, what God had committed to them. Thus then the prophets had feelings to condole with their own kindred, and at the same time were enabled to surmount whatever might check or hinder them from performing their office. Jeremiah did thus condole with his own nation, when he knew that shortly ruin would overtake them; but yet he felt bound to execute what God had bidden him to do, and to obey his call.

However bitter therefore was the declaration, *Thou shalt speak to them, but they will not hear*, yet Jeremiah went forth; for he knew that he must obey God's command,

whatever might be the issue. The same resolution ought to be formed at this day by all the faithful ministers of God. They ought to strive as far as they can to promote the salvation of the people; but still when they see that their doctrine succeeds not as they wish, and that it is the savour of death to the whole world, they ought nevertheless to follow their course: why? because they are always a sweet and good savour to God, whatever may be the event. God then declares to his servant what would be the issue, in order that he might not cease to execute his office with invincible courage, even if no fruit appeared. It was also his purpose to shew before the time to the people their perverseness, if there was possibly any hope, or at least, that he might doubly prove them to be unhealable. It was further his design to consult the good of those few who cherished true religion in their hearts, though the multitude were running headlong to their own ruin.

In like manner at this day it is necessary thus to sustain the souls of the faithful; for while the ungodly rave against God, and while almost the whole world is seized with this madness, what would become of the godly, had they not this fact to think of,—that it is nothing new for hypocrites, who boast that they are God's people and his Church, to reject his grace and to regard as nothing his servants. This truth then is serviceable to us at this day, and may be applied in the same way, so that our minds may not despond nor vacillate, when we see the majority of those, whom God addresses by his servants, heedless and deaf. *Thou shalt speak to them*, he says, *all these words.*

He says not without a reason, *All these words;* for if the Prophet had only briefly declared to them what he had heard from God's mouth, he might have discharged his office with less weariness; but when he had often repeated what had been committed to him, it was not done without great trouble and sorrow; for as we have said at the beginning, he spent his labour on the people, not for one year or for ten years; for he preached to them for twenty, thirty, forty years, and pursued his course even beyond that time. When he saw the truth of God thus rejected by the people,

how could he otherwise than feel weariness at times? It is therefore not in vain intimated, as I have said, that he was chosen, that he might try, not only for one day, or for a few months or years, whether he could recover the people to the way of salvation, but that he was to go on through all obstacles, so as not to faint, whatever might take place. *They will not hear thee,* he says: and further,—

Thou shalt call to them, and they will not answer thee. This also, which God foretells him, is emphatical,—that if the Prophet called most loudly, (as Isaiah is bidden to do, (Is. lviii. 1,) and in his person all teachers,) and called even to hoarseness, yet he is told they would not answer. This shews still more fully their perverseness; for they were not only deaf to God's voice and neglected plain teaching, but also disregarded the most vehement exhortations. He then adds—

28. But thou shalt say unto them, This *is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

28. Et dices ad eos, Hæc gens, quæ non audierunt vocem Jehovæ Dei sui, et non receperunt disciplinam; periit veritas et excisa est ab ore eorum.

God shews now that he must act in a new way. The first duty of teachers is to set forth the will of God, to shew what is right, and then to exhort, if plain teaching proves not sufficient. But God intimates here that he was under the necessity to change his manner, because they were wholly irreclaimable. *Thou shalt* then *say* this as the last thing; as though he had said, "I indeed wished to try, whether they were capable of being improved, and have employed thee for this purpose: after having long borne with them, knowing by a long trial that thy labour is useless, thou shalt say to them, "I bid you adieu at last." For what is the meaning of these words, *This is a nation which heard not the voice of its God,* except that the Prophet, after long trials, knew that he was neither to teach nor exhort them? It is not to be doubted but that God referred to the Jews themselves; for it was his object to expose their impious perverseness. He yet comforted his servant; for he hence knew, that though he could do no good to his hearers, yet his labour was acceptable to God and not without its fruit:

for the truth of God is not only fruitful in the salvation of men, but also in their perdition. (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) God then shews, that there would be no loss to his servant, even though the Jews repented not; for he would be their judge, and denounce by the highest authority their destruction.

We now perceive the design of the Holy Spirit in saying, *Thou shalt* at length *say, This is a nation which has not hearkened to the voice of its God:* for the Prophet is not bidden here to address the Jews, but to pronounce on them a sentence, that the whole world might know how base and detestable had been their contumacy, and how abominable their impiety; for the whole nation had refused to hear. The word *nation* seems here to be taken in a bad sense: it is indeed in many places to be taken for "people;" but in other places Scripture sets גּוֹיִם, *guim*, in opposition to God's chosen people. And perhaps this word has been used, that the Jews might know that they in vain gloried in their own dignity. He shews that they did not excel other nations, for they were themselves of the same class, a nation. *This is a nation*, he says, *which has not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah their God.*[1] In saying this he doubtless amplified their crime; for as God had made himself plainly known to the Jews, they could not pretend ignorance nor plead any doubt respecting what the prophets taught. As then they had designedly rejected their own God, they hence became more obviously guilty and abominable.

He afterwards adds, *They have not received correction.* He points out the very source of rebellion,—they were unwilling to undertake the yoke. Here then he excludes all those plausible pretences by which the Jews might cloak their impiety, as hypocrites are ever wont to do. Hence he declares that they had been unteachable, for they had refused correction. The word מוּסָר, *musar*, often means chastisement; but generally signifies every kind of training. As the subject here is teaching, the Prophet means that they were wilfully blind, for they would not be taught. Now this is the

[1] Our version is wrong, "obeyeth not;" for the charge against them is, that they did not *attend* or give ear to God's voice: they would not hear it, any more than the Papists at this day. This is evident from the previous verse.—*Ed.*

extremity of wicked perverseness, that is, when men become so degenerated, that they wilfully assimilate themselves to brute beasts by rejecting the yoke of God.

He then subjoins, that *truth*, or faith, had *perished*. The word אמונה, *amune*, may be taken in two senses. Some refer it to what belongs to God, as meaning religion, or faith, or piety. But the Prophet seems to take it in a larger sense, as signifying what is sincere; for they acted perfidiously towards men as well as towards God. The word then is to be taken simply as meaning integrity, as though he had said, that nothing true or sincere remained in them, but that they were so corrupt that they mocked God and deceived men, and that nothing but dissimulation prevailed among them. This meaning is confirmed by what follows, that it is *cut off from their mouth*.[1] We hence learn that their perfidy is condemned because they acted falsely; and as their heart was full of duplicity, so also was their tongue. He intimates, in short, that there was no hope as to their repentance; for had they promised a hundred times to God to be teachable and obedient, and shewed before the world any appearance of integrity, their promises would have passed off into mere fallacies and deceptions. He then adds—

29. Cut off thine hair, *O Jerusalem*, and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

29. Tonde comam tuam et projice et attolle super excelsa lamentationem; quia reprobavit (*vel*, vilipendit; *sed verbum reprobandi magis placet hoc loco*) Jehova, et reliquit ætatem indignationis suæ.

Here again Jeremiah exhorts his own people to lament; and he uses the feminine gender, as though he called the people, the daughter of Sion, or the daughter of Jerusalem. He then, according to a common mode of speaking, calls the whole people a woman.[2]

[1] All the ancient versions and the *Targum* render אמונה by πίστις, fides—faith, fidelity or faithfulness. The first verb, "perished" or lost, is omitted by the *Septuagint* and *Arabic*, but is retained by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and the *Targum*. The second verb is stronger than the first; faithfulness was lost from the mouth, yea, it was completely separated from it.

Lost is faithfulness, yea, wholly separated from the mouth.

[2] The emendations of *Houbigant*, adopted by *Blayney*, are by no means to be approved; for without the authority of any MSS. or versions, he changes the gender of these verbs in succession. It is a common thing in

He first bids her to *shave off the hair.* The word נזר, *nesar*, means the hair, derived from the Nazarites, who allowed their hair to grow: and there may be here a striking allusion to the Nazarites who were sacred to God; as though he had said, "This people are profane, and therefore ought to have nothing in common with the Nazarites." Hence also is derived נזר, *nesar*, a crown. Though then the word means the hair, yet the allusion is not to be overlooked,—that this people, rejected by God, are bidden to cut off and to throw away the hair. After the throwing away of the hair there was to be great lamentation; *Raise*, he says, *on high places a lamentation.* This may seem to be an exhortation to repentance: but as we have seen elsewhere, though the prophets often gave the people the hope of pardon and reconciliation, yet in this place the Prophet no doubt denounces a final judgment, and is a herald of lamentation, because the prevailing impiety was irreclaimable. He does not then perform here the duty of a teacher, but in a hostile manner denounces ruin: for it immediately follows—

For rejected hath Jehovah and forsaken the generation of his wrath. The word דור, *dur*, means an age, not time, but men of the same age: as we call that our generation which now lives in the world, and that which is dead the generation of our fathers, and what succeeds us the next generation. It is indeed true, that the Israelites in every age were worthy of a similar vengeance; but God no doubt shews here, that his vengeance was at hand, for he had long borne with the perverse conduct of the people, and suspended his judgment. As then vengeance was now to be executed, the Prophet calls that age the age of God's wrath; for we know that the genitive case in Hebrew has often such a meaning as this. Then the age of his wrath means the age or generation devoted to extreme vengeance; for their wickedness against God was extreme, as long as he treated them with forbearance. The longer then he had deferred his judgment, the heavier punishment was at hand. It afterwards follows—

the prophets to call the people the daughter of Sion: and probably they are here so addressed, because the hair is an ornament to a female, and to cut it off is a token of deep distress.—*Ed.*

30. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

30. Quoniam fecerunt filii Jehudah malum in oculis meis, dicit Jehova: posuerunt abominationes suas in domo, super quam invocatum est nomen meum, ad polluendam ipsam.

Lest the Jews should murmur and complain that God was too rigorous, the Prophet adds, that they were not given up to destruction without the justest reasons. How so? They had *done evil.* To do evil here means, that they had not offended in one thing, but had given themselves up to wickedness and evil doings. It is the same as though he had said, that they were so corrupt, that they were wholly inured to the doing of evil, and had by long use contracted evil habits; for they continually provoked God. But as they flattered themselves, the Prophet reminds them here of God's judgment: "It is enough," he says, "that the Judge condemns you; for if ye see not your wickedness nor acknowledge your sin, yet this will not avail you; for God declares that you are guilty in his sight."

We see that there is an implied contrast between the sight of God and the delusions by which hypocrites soothed themselves, while they made evasions or perversely excused their sins, or sought to escape by circuitous windings. God then shews that his own sight, or knowledge, is sufficient, how blind soever man may be, and however the whole world may connive at their sins.

He adds one kind of sin, that they had *set up their abominations*[1] in the Temple. This refers to superstitions. But as we have seen elsewhere, and shall often have to observe, the Prophets frequently reproved sins by mentioning only one sin for the whole. Then what was especially wicked in the people he states, and that was, that the Temple was *polluted* with superstitions. We have already said, that it

[1] The word means what is unclean and filthy, "their filthy things." They were the idols which were introduced into the Temple. They did this evil "before his eyes," or in his presence, as the Temple was his habitation. They brought idols as it were into his very presence, and thereby literally violated the first commandment, which expressly forbad them to have other gods before him or in his presence. By what means did they evade this explicit command? In the same way as the Church of Rome justifies idolatry,—that idols are helps to devotion: but God regards them as abominations.—*Ed.*

was an intolerable sacrilege to pollute the Temple with abominations, which was then the only true Temple in the world: for it was God's will that sacrifices should be offered to him in that one place; and he had carefully described everything necessary for a right worship. When, therefore, the Jews polluted that very Temple, how abominable was such a profanation? It was not then without reason that the Prophet brings forward what was especially wicked in the people,—that God's house was polluted with superstitions and many spurious ceremonies, and that there his whole worship was vitiated. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou so constantly invitest us, daily and even hourly, to thyself, we may not give thee occasion to complain, as of thy people of old, that we are deaf and thus neglect thy holy admonitions, but that we may be teachable and submissive to thee, and that, as thou risest early, we may also be ready to meet thee, and be obedient to thee, not only for one day, but persevere through life in the same course, until at length we shall reach that blessed rest, prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Thirty-First.

31. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart.

31. Et ædificavit excelsa Topheth, quæ in valle filii Hinnom, ut comburerent filios suos et filias suas igni; quod non mandavi, et non ascendit super cor meum.

JEREMIAH in this verse also inveighs against those superstitions by which the Jews had corrupted the true and pure worship of God. He says, that they had *builded high places*, which was prohibited in the law. (Lev. xxvi. 30.) Now God, as it has been before said, prefers obedience to all sacrifices, (1 Sam. xv. 22:) hence the Prophet justly condemned them, that they forsook the Temple and built for themselves high places or groves, and also altars.

He then mentions one particular place, even *Tophet in the valley of Hinnom*. The prophets, in order to render the

place detestable, no doubt designated the infernal regions by תפת, *Tophet*, and גיא הנם, *gia enom*. For when Isaiah speaks, in the thirtieth chapter, of the eternal punishment of the wicked, he mentions Tophet, which is the same word as we find here. As to the *valley of Hinnom*, it is called in Greek Gehenna, and is taken to designate eternal death, or the torments which await all the wicked. In a similar manner the word Paradise is metaphorically taken for the blessed state and for the eternal inheritance; for God so placed man at first in that eastern garden, that he might in a manner protect him under his own wings. As then the blessing and favour of God shone on that place where Adam first dwelt, that it might be a certain image of celestial life and of true happiness, so they called the glory, prepared for all God's children in heaven, Paradise. So also on the other hand the prophets called hell גיא הנם, *gia enom*, in order that the Jews might detest those impious and sacrilegious modes of worship by which their fathers had polluted themselves. And for the same reason they call hell, Tophet. The ancients also say, that it was a place in the suburbs of the city. They were not wont then to assemble afar off for the sake of these abominations, since the place was within sight of the Temple, and they knew that there was the only true altar approved by God, and that it was not lawful to offer sacrifices anywhere else. Since they knew this, and God had set such a place before their eyes, the greater was their madness, when they preferred a filthy spot in which to worship God according to their own will, or rather according to their own wantonness.

Of this so great an audacity Jeremiah now complains: They *builded for themselves high places in Tophet*, even *in the valley*. He introduces the word *son;* but it is called גיא הנם, *gia enom*, the valley of Hinnom; whence comes the word Gehenna, as we have already said.

He adds, *that they might burn their sons and their daughters*. It was a horrible and prodigious madness for parents not to spare their own children, but to cast them into the fire; for they must have been so seized with a diabolic fury as to divest themselves of all human feelings: and yet they

had a plausible reason, as they supposed; for it was a zeal worthy of all praise to prefer God to their own children. When therefore they cast their children into the fire, this kind of zeal might have deceived the simple; and to this was added a pretext derived from example, for Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his own son. But it hence appears what men will do when they are led away by an inconsiderate zeal; for from the beginning of the world the source of all superstitions has been this,—that men have devised for themselves various modes of worship, and have given themselves the liberty to seek a way of their own to pacify God.

As to the pretended example, they were so blind as not to distinguish between themselves and Abraham; for he was commanded to offer his son, (Gen. xxii. 2;) but they, without any command, attempted to do the same thing; this was extreme presumption. As to Abraham, he obeyed God; and he could not have been led astray, when he knew that such a sacrifice was approved by God. But when the Jews emulated his zeal, it was an extreme folly; and they were especially culpable, because they neglected God's command and wholly disregarded it. They were, however, so far carried away by their own wantonness as to cast their own children into the fire, and under the pretence of piety: so great and so savage a cruelty prevailed among them. We hence perceive that there is no end of sinning, when men give themselves up to their own inventions; for God surrenders those to Satan, that they may be led by the spirit of giddiness and of madness and of stupidity. Let us therefore learn ever to regard what God approves: and let this be the very beginning of our inquiry, whenever we undertake anything, whether God commands it; and this course ought especially to be observed with regard to his worship; for, as it has been already stated, religion is especially founded on faith, and faith is based on the word of God: and hence it is here added—

Which I commanded them not, and which never came to my mind. This reason ought to be carefully noticed, for God here cuts off from men every occasion for making evasions, since he condemns by this one phrase, "I have not

commanded them," whatever the Jews devised. There is then no other argument needed to condemn superstitions, than that they are not commanded by God: for when men allow themselves to worship God according to their own fancies, and attend not to his commands, they pervert true religion. And if this principle was adopted by the Papists, all those fictitious modes of worship, in which they absurdly exercise themselves, would fall to the ground. It is indeed a horrible thing for the Papists to seek to discharge their duties towards God by performing their own superstitions. There is an immense number of them, as it is well known, and as it manifestly appears. Were they to admit this principle, that we cannot rightly worship God except by obeying his word, they would be delivered from their deep abyss of error. The Prophet's words then are very important, when he says, that God had *commanded* no such thing, and that it never came to his mind; as though he had said, that men assume too much wisdom, when they devise what he never required, nay, what he never knew. It is indeed certain, that there was nothing hid from God, even before it was done: but God here assumes the character of man, as though he had said, that what the Jews devised was unknown to him, as his own law was sufficient.

Now, as the words Tophet and Gehenna were so stigmatized by the prophets, we may hence learn how displeasing to God is every idolatry and profanation of his true and pure worship: for he compares these notorious places in which the Jews performed so sedulously their devotions, to the infernal regions. And hence at this day, when the Papists boast of what they call their devotions, we may justly say, that there are as many gates, through which they throw themselves headlong into hell, as there are modes of worship devised by them for the purpose of conciliating God. It follows—

32. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but, The valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.

32. Propterea, Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et non dicetur (*hoc est*, quibus non dicetur) Topheth et vallis filii Hinnom, sed vallis occisionis; et sepelient Topheth, quia non erit locus.

The Prophet denounces a punishment, though the Jews thought that they deserved a reward. The case is the same with the Papists at this day, who thoughtlessly boast, when they heap together many abominations; for they think that God is bound as it were by a law, not to overlook so much diligence. But the Prophet shews how grossly deceived they are who worship God superstitiously, without the authority of his word; for he threatens them here with the heaviest judgment,—*Called no more*, he says, *shall it be Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom; but The valley of slaughter shall it be called;* for the whole land was to be filled with slaughters.

He adds, *Bury shall they* there, for elsewhere *there will be no place.*[1] He intimates that so great would be the slaughters, that Jerusalem would not contain the dead: hence, he says, graves will be made in Tophet; and many also will be slain there. A dead body, we know, was unclean by the Law; and it was not lawful to offer sacrifices to God near graves. (Num. xix. 11, 16.) The Prophet then shews, that when the Jews foolishly consecrated that place to God, they committed a dreadful profanation, for that place was to be wholly filled with dead bodies, and polluted also by the slaughter of men. We hence see what the superstitious do when they follow their own devices—that they provoke God's wrath; for by the grievousness of the punishment we may form a judgment as to the degree in which God abominates all false modes of worship, which men devise without the warrant of his law; for we must ever remember this principle, *I commanded it not, nor hath it ever come to my mind.* It follows—

33. And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away.

33. Et erit cadaver populi hujus in cibum avi cœlorum (avibus) et bestiæ terræ (*hoc est*, bestiis) nec erit qui absterreat (*hoc est*, qui terrore abigat.)

[1] This is the meaning according to all the ancient versions and the *Targum*. The *Syriac* is, "for want of place." *Gataker* gives the same meaning. Our version follows *Pagninus*, and is substantially adopted by *Blayney* both here and in chap. xix. 11. Literally it is, "From no place," that is, "From there being no place," as *Calvin* says elsewhere.—*Ed.*

Jeremiah threatens them with something more grievous than death itself,—that God would impress the marks of his wrath even on their dead bodies. It is indeed true what a heathen poet says, "That the loss of a grave is not great," (*Virgil*, Æneid ;) but we must on the other hand remember, that burying has been held as a sacred custom in all ages; for it was a symbol of the last resurrection. Barbarous then were the words, "Give me a stick, if you fear that birds will eat my dead body ;" as the cynic, who had ordered his body to be cast into the field, derided what was said in answer to him, "The wild beasts and birds will devour thee :" "Oh," said he, "let me have a stick, and I will drive them away ;" intimating by such a saying, that he would then be without any feeling ; but he shewed that he entertained no hope of immortality. But it was God's will that the custom of burying should prevail among all nations, that in death itself there might be some evidence or intimation of the last resurrection. When therefore the Prophet declares here and in other places that the Jews would be without a burial, he doubtless enhances the vengeance of God.

We indeed know that some of the most holy men had not been buried ; for the prophets were sometimes exposed to wild beasts and birds : and the whole Church complains in Ps. lxxix. 2, that the dead bodies of the saints were exposed and became food for birds and wild beasts. This has sometimes happened ; for God often mixes the good with the evil in temporal punishments, as he makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil : but yet of itself and for the most part, it is an evidence of a curse, when a man's body is cast away without any burial.

It is this then that the Prophet means when he says, *The carcase of this people shall be meat for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there will be none to terrify* them ;[1] that is, there will be no one to perform the humane office of driving the beasts away, the very thing

[1] The poetical singular is used throughout the verse,—
And the carcase of this people shall be for meat
To the bird of heaven and to the beast of the earth,
And *there will be* no terrifier.—*Ed.*

which nature itself would lead one to do. If any one now objects and says, that in this case the faithful could not be distinguished from the reprobate, the answer is plainly this, —that when the honour of a burial is denied to the faithful, God will become the avenger. But this does not prove that God does not in this way inflict a visible punishment on the reprobate, and thus expose them to reproach by whom he has been despised. He afterwards adds—

34. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; for the land shall be desolate.

34. Et cessare faciam ex urbibus Jehudah et ex compitis Jerusalem vocem gaudii et vocem lætitiæ, vocem sponsi et vocem sponsæ; quia in vastitatem erit (*hoc est*, redigetur) terra.

He still continues the same subject; for he denounces on the Jews the punishment which they had deserved. He more fully expresses what he mentioned in the last verse respecting the shameful and dreadful barbarity that would follow the slaughter; for the whole country would not only be harassed by the enemy, but wholly laid waste: for when sounds of joy and gladness cease, all places are filled with lamentations; and when no marriages are celebrated, it is a sign of devastation.

But by marriage, the Prophet, stating a part for the whole, understands whatever was necessary for the preservation of society; it is the same as though he had said, "There shall be now no marrying:" for without marriages the human race cannot continue. Hence this cessation would be the same, as though he had said, that they would be wholly regardless of all those things necessary to perpetuate mankind. He thus adds nothing new, but expands what we have before observed,—that the whole land would be filled with dead bodies, and that there would be such lamentation as to deter men from all their usual and ordinary habits: he afterwards shews more fully the same thing.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves:

2. And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth.

1. In die illo, dicit Jehova, extrahent ossa regum Jehudah, et ossa principum ejus, et ossa sacerdotum, et ossa prophetarum, et ossa civium Jerosolymæ (habitantium,) è sepulchris suis;

2. Et expendent coram sole et luna et toto exercitu cœlorum, quæ dilexerunt (*nam relativum neutrum comprehendit et solem et lunam et exercitum; vel, si magis placeat vertere,* quos exercitus dilexerunt,) et quibus servierunt, et post quos ambularunt, et quos quæsierunt, et coram quibus prostrati sunt (*hoc est,* se inclinarunt;) neque colligentur, et non sepelientur, in stercus in terræ superficie erunt.

I HAVE said that Jeremiah repeats in the first verse what he had before said,—that the Jews would be deprived of their graves, in order that there might be on the dead a mark of God's vengeance; as though he had said, that after having been destroyed by the hand of enemies, they would have their punishment extended farther by having their dead bodies exposed to the wild beasts and birds. The faithful, as I have said, suffer no loss, when burial is denied them; but yet they do not disregard burial, inasmuch as it is a badge of the resurrection. Though God suffers them to be involved in this disgrace with the reprobate, yet this does not hinder but that God should execute his vengeance on the wicked by such a temporal punishment as turns to a blessing to the faithful. It is therefore no unmeaning denunciation, when the Prophet says that the time was at hand, when their bones would be taken out of their graves.

He mentions *the bones of kings, and of priests, and of prophets, and of the whole people.* The kings thought that as soon as they were hid in their graves, their dead bodies would be deemed sacred: the same notion prevailed as to rulers, priests, and prophets: but he says that no grave would be untouched or free from the outrage of enemies; and thus

he shews, that the city would be rooted up from its foundations. Were the city to remain safe, the graves would be spared. Hence this punishment could not have been inflicted, without the very foundations of the city being dug up by the enemies. In short, he points out here a dreadful and final overthrow; and at the same time he shews the reason why God would manifest such severity towards the Jews.

It was, because they *served the sun, and the moon, and the stars.* It was God's just vengeance, that their bones should be taken from their graves, in order that the sun and moon and all the stars might be witnesses of his judgment. By these words Jeremiah indirectly reprobates the senselessness of the people for thinking that they performed an acceptable service to the sun and moon. He therefore says, that all the stars and the planets would become as it were spectators of the vengeance which God would execute; as though he had said, that the whole celestial host would approve of that punishment; for nothing is more detestable to creatures, than when the glory of their Maker is ascribed to them. It is indeed true that the sun, moon, and stars are without sense or reason; but the Prophet here attributes reason to them, in order that he might shake off from the Jews that stupidity in which they hardened themselves, while they thought that they were rendering to the sun an acceptable service. At the same time he alludes, as it appears also from other places, to the punishment inflicted on adulterers: for when a harlot is drawn out and led forth in contempt and disgrace in the presence of her adulterers, it is deemed a most just punishment. And thus as the Jews had as it were committed adultery with the sun and the moon and the stars, so the Prophet says here, that their disgrace and baseness would be made manifest in the sight of the sun, and the moon, and the stars.

He says, *which they have loved.* He no doubt alludes to the blind ardour by which idolaters were possessed, when they zealously pursued their illicit devotions; for it was a species of an unbridled and mad passion, as it appears from other places; for no fornicator burns with a more impetuous

lust after a woman, than idolaters do, when Satan dazzles their eyes and fascinates their hearts. Of this impure love then does the Prophet now speak; and at the same time, he indirectly condemns the Jews for having alienated themselves without a cause from God, who was their legitimate husband. There is indeed nothing less tolerable than for men thus perfidiously to forsake God, when he has invited them to himself, and contracted as it were with them a holy and an inviolable marriage.

He afterwards adds, *whom they have served.* This was still more base; they devoted themselves to the work of serving the sun, the moon, and the stars. He mentions in the third place, that they *walked after them.* God had shewn them the right way, and had commanded them to follow him: but they forsook God, says the Prophet, and followed the stars of heaven. He states in the fourth place, that they *sought* them. By this he refers to their perverseness. Some render the word "consulted," of which I do not approve, for it is strained and far-fetched.[1] The Prophet, I doubt not, denotes here the persevering attention of the Jews to the objects of their worship; for they followed their idols not by a sudden and momentary impulse, but they resolutely devoted themselves to them and became as it were fixed in their wicked purpose. And he says in the last place, that they *prostrated themselves* before them. This was the way in which they served them. It is an evidence of reverence when men prostrate themselves before their idols; and thus they serve them, for it is an act of worship. The Prophet might indeed have sufficiently expressed in one sentence the impiety of the people; but he joins together several sentences for the sake of amplification, in order that he might render more evident the ingratitude of the people in seeking for

[1] Though it be improper to render the word "consult;" yet the meaning is the same: they sought them, that is, their counsel and direction. They sought them in all emergencies. "To inquire of the Lord," in Gen. xxv. 22, is literally "to seek the Lord;" and "to inquire of God," in Exod. xviii. 15, is literally "to seek God." Indeed, to inquire of or to ask, that is, counsel, seems to be the most common meaning of the word. "Sought," is the *Vulgate* and *Targum*,—"consulted," is the *Syriac*,—and "cleaved to," is the *Septuagint* and *Arabic*; and this is the idea of *Calvin.—Ed.*

themselves unknown gods, and in setting up false and fictitious modes of worship, rather than to render obedience to the only true God and to acquiesce in his law, which is a certain rule, and never leads any astray.[1]

He afterwards adds, *They shall not be gathered, nor be buried; for dung shall they be on the face* or surface *of the land.* He confirms what he had said of the punishment before mentioned,—that they had acted disdainfully towards God, and had prostrated themselves before their idols, so after death they would be made base and detestable, so that the mind would revolt at such a hateful sight. This is the meaning. It follows—

3. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts.

3. Et eligetur (*ad verbum esset,* electa est) mors (*sed debet resolvi in futurum tempus*) præ vita ab omnibus reliquiis, quæ residuæ erunt ab hac prava natione (à natione hac mala) in omnibus locis ubi residui fuerint, ad quæ expulero eos (ad quæ illuc; *sed* נְאֻם *est supervacuum,*) dicit Jehova exercituum.

He intimates in this verse, that all survivors would be doubly miserable, as it would be better for them to die at once than to pine away in unceasing evils: for they who give another meaning to the words, seem not to understand the design of the Prophet. The import then of the passage is,—that however dreadful God's judgment would be, when slaughters everywhere prevailed, and dead bodies were drawn out which had been previously buried, yet all this would be a slight punishment in comparison with what God would inflict on the rest, such as remained alive: and he also inti-

[1] It would be better to render אֲשֶׁר before the verbs here as an adverb, *because, as,* or *inasmuch as.* There is a pronoun following every verb,—

2. And they shall expose them to the sun,
And to the moon, and to all the host of heaven:
As they had loved them, and as they had served them,
And as they had walked after them,
And as they had sought them,
And as they had bowed down to them.
They shall not be gathered, nor buried;
For dung on the face of the land shall they be.

The order here is from the principle to the action, and not the contrary, as is often the case: love—service—walking according to the rules prescribed—seeking counsel—and worshipping.—*Ed.*

mates that their life would be more miserable than death itself, yea, than ten deaths.

That those then who would escape death might not think that they gained any advantage, the Prophet says, *Chosen shall be death before life by all the residue.* We hence learn how grievous was to be God's vengeance; for nothing would be better or more desirable than to undergo death at once, as life would be nothing else but a continued languor and torment. Expected then *will be death* in *all places* in which there shall be survivors, *where I shall drive them.* He mentions a reason for this twofold misery,—they would not be allowed to live in their own country, but would become aliens, —and they would find in their exile God's hand against them, and as it were following them everywhere.[1]

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou terrifiest us daily with thy judgments, and as it is needful for our sloth to be stimulated, and for our corruption to be thus corrected,—O grant, that we may be moved by thy threatenings, and at the same time suffer ourselves to be kindly invited by thee, and make such progress in thy word, that, being terrified by threatenings, we may also readily and willingly obey whenever thou in a paternal manner callest us to thyself, and labour in every way to devote ourselves wholly to thee, by subduing the corrupt affections of our flesh, so that nothing may hinder us to be submissive to thy will, until we shall at length enjoy the rest of that eternal inheritance, which thou hast promised to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

[1] The literal rendering of this verse is as follows,—
And chosen shall be death rather than life by all the remnant,—
Who *shall* remain of this wicked family,
In all the places of such as *shall* remain,
Whither I shall have driven them,
Saith Jehovah of hosts.

Blayney justly observes, that the participle in the second line is in apposition with "remnant," as explanatory of it, and is not to be put in the genitive case, as in our version. A similar construction is found in chap. xxiv. 8. But there is no sufficient authority or reason for omitting the same participle after "places," as is done by *Blayney*. Such repetitions are common in the prophets.—*Ed.*

Lecture Thirty-Second.

4. Moreover, thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return?

4. Et dices ad eos, Sic dicit Jehova, An qui ceciderunt non resurgent? si quis aversus fuerit non revertetur?

5. Why *then* is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

5. Quare rebellis est populus hic Jerosolymæ rebellione perpetua? (forti, *ad verbum;*) adhæserunt fraudi (*vel*, apprehenderunt fraudem,) noluerunt reverti.

THOUGH God had reminded his Prophet of the event, yet he still invites the Jews to repentance; not that there was any hope of restoring them to a right mind, (for he had said that they were wholly irreclaimable,) but that their perverseness might be less excusable; and it was also his object to afford some relief to the small number of the godly who still remained; for they had not all fallen away into impiety, though the great body of the people had become corrupt. God then, partly to aggravate the sin of the ungodly, and partly to provide for his faithful people, exhorts those to repentance, who were yet wholly intractable. And here we ought to consider that God's goodness, when abused, brings a much heavier judgment. God does here in a manner contend with the wickedness of his people, by setting before them the hope of pardon, if they repented.

Thou shalt then *say to them;* that is, "Though I have already testified to thee that thy labour would be in vain, yet thou shalt not give over thy work." *Shall they who have fallen rise again?* This sentence is variously explained; the greater part of interpreters confine it to the Jews only, "Shall the Jews who have fallen rise again?" As to the second clause, some give this explanation, "If Israel returns, will not God also return?" that is, from his wrath, or, "Will he not be propitious?" Or, "If Israel turns away, will not God also turn away?" Others understand both parts of the sentence of the people, "If the people have once turned away, will they not yet return to God?" For the verb שׁוּב, *shub*, has contrary meanings; it means, to fall away, to rebel,

to go back; and it means also to return. But after having maturely considered the words and the design of the Prophet, I think it to be a general statement, as though he had said, "When any one falls, he immediately thinks of recovering his fall; when any one deviates from the right course, being warned of his going astray, he immediately looks for the road. This is what is usually done, what then means this so great a stupidity, that the people of Jerusalem do not repent, when yet they ought to have long ago acknowledged their fall and their wanderings?"

Whoever will impartially consider the discourse of the Prophet must see that this is the real meaning; for, in the second of these verses, he says, *Why is this people of Jerusalem*, &c.; he now first speaks, as it clearly appears, of the people. It then follows that the former verse ought not to be applied to the people; but it contains only a general statement. In short, Jeremiah condemns here the madness of the people, because they followed not the example of those who have either fallen or deviated from the way by mistake. For it is what is naturally implanted in all, that they do not willingly perish in their misfortunes. He then who falls immediately strives to rise again; and he who leaves the right way, tries if possible to return to it again. This then is what the most foolish will do; why then, says Jeremiah, do not this people imitate such an example? He therefore shews by this comparison, that their conduct was monstrous; for they obstinately adhered to their vices, and never thought that there was a hope of reconciliation if they from the heart returned unto God. And he emphatically mentions *Jerusalem;* for had such obstinacy prevailed among the Chaldeans or the Egyptians, it would indeed have been inexcusable; but not so strange as among a people to whom the law had been given, and to whom God had plainly revealed the way of salvation. When, therefore, this people so hardened themselves as to reject all warnings, was it not monstrous?[1]

[1] Most agree in this view,—*Gataker, Venema, Henry, Lowth, Blayney,* and *Scott.* All the versions favour this view, giving two different meanings to שׁוּב, repeated in the last clause, except the *Syriac,* which gives this version, "Though they ought to repent, they yet do not repent."—*Ed.*

Then he says, that they were *rebellious with a pertinacious rebellion;* that is, that they forsook God not only through levity or want of thought, or some sudden impulse, but so pertinaciously, that the prophets spent their labour in vain in teaching and exhorting them. Hence he calls it a *strong rebellion,* though the word may be taken here as in other places in the sense of *perpetual.* And he assigns the cause, because they *laid hold on deception,* that is, they adhered fast to deception. But the Prophet means by deception, not that by which a neighbour is deceived or circumvented, but hypocrisy, by which men so blind themselves, that they are unwilling either to attend to God's word, or to open their eyes to see the light. When, therefore, men through wilful obstinacy bury themselves in darkness, they may be said to *lay fast hold on deception.*[1]

David says, in Ps. xxxii. 2, that the man is blessed in

[1] The idea of revolt or apostasy is given by the ancient versions to the verb used at the beginning of the verse, and also to the noun which follows, and not that of rebellion, as by *Calvin.* The same meaning is given by *Gataker, Venema,* and *Blayney;* and they consider that Jerusalem is in apposition with "this people," in this manner,—

Why has this people, Jerusalem,
Revolted with perpetual revolt?

As it has been already observed, the verb שׁוּב, with all its derivations, means strictly to *turn,* but is used in the sense of turning to or from, that is, of returning or of departing. The context is our guide. It can hardly be supposed to have these two meanings in the same passage. All agree in giving it the idea of returning, at the end of the fourth verse, and at the end of this verse, the fifth; and in the three other instances in which it occurs here, they give it the idea of turning away or departing. I am disposed to think that it has the first meaning throughout the passage. I would render these two verses thus,—

4. Thou shalt also say to them, Thus saith Jehovah,—
Do *men* fall and not rise again?
Does *any one* return and not return?—
5. Why,—often have this people returned,
Jerusalem *is* returning continually!—
They hold fast deceit, they have refused to return.

The hypocrisy of the people is the subject: they pretended to return, but did not really return; they were deceitful. It is a sort of a dialogue. The beginning of the next verse is an answer to the end of this,—

6. I hearkened and heard, "No:" thus they say:
Yet no man has repented of his evil,—
Saying, What have I done?
Every one returns to his own course,
Like a horse rushing into battle.

The charge of refusing to return was negatived.—*Ed.*

whose spirit there is no guile: he entertains no guile, as we commonly do. Now, to entertain guile is to possess a deceitful heart. He had before said that they are blessed whose sins are forgiven and to whom iniquity is not imputed: he adds by way of explanation, provided there be no guile in the spirit; and why? Because wicked men seem to themselves to be blessed, for they perceive not their own misery, because they are enveloped in their own coverings: and this is the guile of which David speaks. According to the same meaning, our Prophet says, that those *laid fast hold on deception*, who were so involved in darkness or so blinded by their lusts, as to seek to deceive God; but they deceive themselves. This then is the cause why those whom God corrects and chastises feel no penitence; for they are wilfully blind, they close their eyes and deafen their ears, and seek to be deceived by the devil; they attend not to the holy warnings given them for their salvation. If then, we wish to be healed of our vices, let us ever begin in this way,—let us carefully examine our thoughts and our motives, and not please ourselves nor deceive ourselves by empty flatteries, but strive to shake off whatever is reprehensible and vicious. The very beginning of true repentance is to renounce all deceptions and fallacies and to seek the light, which can alone discover to us our evils. It afterwards follows—

6. I hearkened and heard, *but* they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

6. Attendi et audivi, non loquentur rectè; nemo est quem pœniteat (*ad verbum*, non vir pœnitens super malo suo; *sed sensus clarior est*, nemo est quem pœniteat) malitiæ suæ, dicendo, Quid feci? omnis vertitur (*ad verbum pro* omnes vertuntur) ad cursos suos, sicut equus ruit (*ad verbum*, inundat; *sed metaphorica est locutio*; sicut *ergo* equus præceps ruit) in prælium.

These words may be considered as spoken by God himself,—that he from heaven examined the state of the people; but it is more suitable to regard them as spoken by the Prophet; for he was placed, as it were, in a watch-tower in order to observe how the people acted towards God. He now testifies, that having seen their pursuits and their doings, he saw nothing that was right. The people ought to have been more touched by these words. We indeed know how ready

we are naturally to lay hold on any pretences, when we wish to continue quiet in our dregs. So the greater part are wont to object and say, "O, indeed, thou reprovest me, but inconsiderately; for thou knowest not what is in my heart." Hence the Prophet says, that he had carefully examined what sort of people they were, and that he spoke of what was well known to him, and fully seen by him,—

I have heard, he says, *and attended; but they speak not rightly.* He means, that so far were the Jews from repenting truly and sincerely, that they did not even with their mouths profess to do so. It is less to confess sins than really to amend; but the Prophet says, that they did not even say what was right. It hence follows, that they were very far from having any serious thoughts of repentance, since they were so wanton with their tongues, or at least afforded no evidence of sorrow.

He then adds, that there was *no one who repented, saying*, &c. This clause is explanatory, for Jeremiah proves here more clearly that they did not *speak rightly*, for they did not say, *What have I done?* But he says first, that there was no one who *repented of his wickedness.* He afterwards shews, that what is first necessary for repentance is, that the sinner should call himself to an account; for as long as we rest secure in our sins, it is impossible for us to repent. It is hence necessary that every one should examine himself, so as to call himself to an account, and in a manner to summon himself before God's tribunal. We then see that men can never be brought to repentance, except they set their own evils before their eyes, so as to feel ashamed, and to ask themselves, as it were in great fear, What have we done? for this question is an evidence of terror. Many, we know, formally own their sins; but this is useless, for afterwards such an acknowledgment vanishes without producing any benefit. Then real repentance necessarily requires that the sinner should not only be displeased with himself, should not only be ashamed, but that he should also be filled with terror at his own sins; for this is what is meant by the inquiry, *What have I done?* for it implies astonishment.

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet's words:

he says, that he did not inconsiderately reprove the people, but that he found such perversity in them that no one *spoke rightly*, that no one repented, because they did not consider what they were, nor examined their own lives, but slept securely in their sins.

He pursues the same subject when he says, that *all turned to their own courses*, that is, to their own lusts. But by the word "courses" the Prophet means impetuous movements; as though he had said, that the Jews were so precipitant in following their lusts, that they in a manner ran headlong after them; and he compares them to horses rushing into battle. We know with what impetuosity horses advance when they hasten to battle; for they seem to fly, to cut the air, and to dig the ground with their hoofs. Thus the comparison is exceedingly suitable, when the Prophet says that the Jews were so impetuous in pursuing their lusts, that they rushed on, not less precipitantly than war-horses when advancing to battle. It now follows—

7. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

7. Etiam ciconia in cœlis cognoscit tempora sua, et turtur et hirundo (*alii vertunt*, picam; *sed nomen hirundinis est aptius, quemadmodum statim patebit,*) et grues observant tempus itineris; populus autem meus non cognoscit judicium Jehovæ.

Here again Jeremiah condemns the shameful insensibility of the people,—that they had less wisdom than birds, not endued with reason and understanding. He then says, that the Jews were more foolish than cranes, swallows, and storks. He no doubt deeply wounded the feelings of the people by so severe a reproof; but it was necessary thus sharply to reprehend the despisers of God; for it appears evident by these words, that they were become exceedingly hardened in their vices. No wonder, then, that the Prophet declares that they were more silly than cranes and swallows. Isaiah also exposes the same sort of madness, when he says that the ox knew his own master, and the ass his master's crib, but that God was not known by his people. (Is. i. 3.) Now Isaiah made the Jews worse than oxen and asses, because these brute animals possess something like memory, so that

they keep to their own manger and crib. So now Jeremiah, speaking of storks, &c., says,—

Behold, the *stork* knows the time in which it ought to migrate from one country to another; and the same is observed by *swallows* and *cranes*.[1] For at stated times they seek a warmer climate; that is, they leave a cold country, that they may escape the severity of winter; and they afterwards know the time in which they are to return. As, then, the birds of the air observe their seasons, how is it that *my people do not* consider *the judgment* of God? By mentioning the *heavens*, he no doubt alludes to the constant flying of birds, the birds having hardly any rest, for they continually rove through the air. Since, then, there is so much wisdom in birds, which yet the air wafts here and there, how comes it, that a people, who dwell quietly at home, who can leisurely meditate on God's law—how comes it that this people understand nothing? We hence see that there is an import in the word *heavens* which has not been noticed. Readers may yet have their doubts; for it is nothing strange that birds in the heavens should have a clearer view, as they come nearer the sun and the element of fire: but different seems to have been the Prophet's object; which was to shew, that though birds labour as it were continually, they yet contrive to know the suitable time for going and returning. Hence, then, is exaggerated more fully the insensibility of that people, who, while sitting leisurely at home, did not consider what God did set before them.

The particle גַּם, *gam*, even, is emphatical; *Even the stork*, he says. What means this, that birds, though not possessed of understanding, do yet know their time? *But my people*, &c. By saying "my people," the Prophet no doubt intended more clearly to set forth their wickedness. For, as I have before said, such blindness in heathens would not have been

[1] It is curious the variety as to the names of birds in this verse, as given in the ancient versions: *Vulgate*, kite—turtle—swallow—stork; *Septuagint*, stork—turtle—swallow—sparrows; *Syriac*, stork—turtle—crane—swallow; *Arabic*, crane—turtle—swallow—birds; and the *Targum* is, stork—turtle—crane—swallow. The names in our versions seem to be the most correct, and are adopted by *Venema* and *Blayney*,—stork—turtle—crane—swallow; the same with the *Syriac* and the *Targum*.—*Ed.*

so strange; but as they were the holy and peculiar people of God, it was far more shameful and monstrous that they knew not his judgment.

Christ uses other words in condemning the Pharisees for not attending to the time of their visitation; for he says, "Ye are wont to conclude what will be the state of the heavens in the morning; for if the sky be red in the evening, ye say, It will be fine to-morrow; and ye know the signs of future and approaching rain: ye possess, he says, judgment sufficiently acute in external things, which conduce to the benefit of the present life; yet ye know not the time of your visitation, and still ye seek signs: but were ye attentive, God would shew to you in a way clear enough, and as it were by the finger, that the time of deliverance which ye pretend to expect is now nigh at hand." But the Prophet reproves the Jews in a severer strain, when he says that there was more fatuity and madness in them than in birds. They *know not*, he says, *the judgment of Jehovah*, though it had been shewn to them many times, and for a long season.

But some one might have objected and said, "No wonder if we perceive not God's judgment, for his judgments are a great deep; and since these exceed what we can comprehend, there is no reason to find fault with us." But the Prophet speaks not here of hidden judgments, which elude the comprehension of men, but of punishments, of which they had been so often warned. Since, then, they were so blind as not to see what was clear and evident, the Prophet justly says that they were more foolish than cranes, and the other birds which he mentions. It follows—

8. How do ye say, We *are* wise, and the law of the Lord *is* with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he *it;* the pen of the scribes *is* in vain.

8. Quomodo dicetis (*pro* dicitis; *significat continuum actum*) sapientes nos (*hoc est*, nos sumus sapientes,) et lex Jehovæ nobiscum est (*vel*, penes nos, *melius*:) certè ecce frustra aptavit stylum (*vel*, calamum) scriptor; frustra sunt scribæ.

Interpreters think that the Prophet here directs his words to the priests, and the false prophets, and the other chiefs of the people, because they proudly arrogated to themselves the knowledge of the law: but what is said may be no less extended to the whole people; for, as we shall presently see,

all of them, from the least to the greatest, no doubt boasted that they were sufficiently wise. I hence think that the Prophet here inveighs against the whole body of the people; for all, almost without exception, rejected his teaching, as we see also to be done at the present day; for who is there that can bear to be admonished and reproved? All say that they are wise enough: "Oh! do you think that I am a child?" or, as it is commonly said, "Do you think that I am a goose? I know how I am to live, and I am not without reason." Thus the rudest and the most ignorant set up their own wisdom and sharpness of wit against God and his prophets. Such audacity and ferociousness prevailed no doubt in the time of Jeremiah. For when he sharply reproved them, they were ready with their answer,—"Oh! thou treatest us as though we were barbarians, as though God's law was unknown to us, as though we had not been taught from our childhood how we are to live: does not God dwell in the midst of us?" Since, then, the Jews did set up as it were this shield against the doctrine of the Prophet, he attacks them here with great vehemence,—

How say ye, We are wise? He afterwards describes the kind of wisdom which they claimed, *The law of God is with us:* and doubtless, to attend to God's law is the way of becoming really wise. Had they justly boasted that they had the law, the Prophet would not have brought against them the charge, that they were doubly foolish. But as they falsely made this pretence, he says to them, How? and here he asks a question as to what was very strange, "How are you so foolish," he says, "that ye think yourselves wise, as though the law of God were with you? Surely, if so, in vain has the law been written; for ye shew by your whole life that you have never known anything of what God by the law commands and sets before us, and what the design of it is."

Thus Jeremiah shews by their life that there was no ground for their foolish boasting; for they gave no evidence of their wisdom. It is indeed necessary for those who seek to be God's disciples to bring forth some fruit: but as there was among them so much impiety, so much contempt of

God, and as, in short, their whole life proclaimed them to be wholly insane, he says, *In vain has he prepared his pen*, even the writer of the law; *and in vain have been the scribes*, that is, the teachers; for by scribes, in the second place, he understands teachers.[1]

I explain this passage somewhat different from other interpreters; for there seems to be implied a kind of irony, as we commonly say, *Il faut bruler tous les livres.* Hence Jeremiah derides their folly, in saying that they knew how they were to live, because the teaching of the law prevailed among them. "If it be so," he says, "what is God's law? Doubtless, nothing, as the whole of its teaching must in this way be deemed as nothing." We now then see that the Jews are here reproved as false, for they claimed the law, as though it were a shadow without a body, and possessed not a particle of right knowledge. He afterwards adds—

9. The wise *men* are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom *is* in them?

9. Pudefacti sunt sapientes, territi sunt et capti sunt (חחת *significat proprie* frangere, *vel*, conterere, *sed transfertur ad animum, et tunc significat* terrere; *dicit igitur esse territos, deinde illaqueatos; postea adjungit causam, nempe,*) quia respuerunt in verbo (*sed* ב *est supervacuum*, verbum *ergo*) Jehova (reprobarunt, *vel* repudiarunt,) et sapientia quid illis (prodest, *subaudiunt quidam interpretes; alii vertunt*, et quid est in ipsis sapientiæ? *ego autem aliter accipio, ut statim dicam.*)

He says now that the *wise were ashamed, and astonished,*

[1] The latter part of this verse has another meaning according to the ancient versions. They are substantially to this purport,—

Behold, surely to deceive *is what* the false pen of the scribes has done.

The *Vulgate*, with which the rest materially agree, is as follows,—

Verily, falsehood has the false pen of the scribes wrought.

As a proof of this it is added in the next verse, that those who pretended to be wise were made ashamed, &c. That the reference is made to the false glosses of the scribes, the expounders of the law, is confirmed by verse 11. I render the whole verse thus,—

8. How can ye say, "Wise *are* we,
And the law of Jehovah *is* with us?"
Indeed!—Behold, to deceive
Has the deceptive pen of the scribes served.

He ironically admits that they had the law; but he refers to the false interpretation of the teachers; and in the next verse he mentions the *effect* on the pretended wise, and the *fact* as to God's law,—

9. Ashamed have become the wise,
They have been dismayed and ensnared:
Behold, the word of Jehovah have they despised;
And wisdom, what have they!—*Ed.*

and ensnared. By which words he means, that the Jews gained nothing by their craftiness, while they arrogated to themselves wisdom, and under this pretence rejected all admonitions, and sought to be spared. "This wisdom," he says, "avails you nothing, for God, as it is said in another place, will take you unawares." (Is. xxix. 14; 1 Cor. i. 19.) *Ashamed*, then, he says, *are they;* not that they were then ashamed; for he said before, in chap. vi. 15, and will state the same presently, that they were so hardened that they could not be made ashamed, nor be made to blush:[1] but he here denounces a punishment, which was soon to overtake them; as though he had said, "Ye have now an iron front, and think that ye can elude God and his servants with impunity; but God will take you unawares, and will so shake off the masks under which you hide yourselves, that your disgrace shall be made manifest to all." This is the meaning.

For the same purpose he says, "Ye are now secure, but God will shortly fill you with such terror, that he will make you greatly *astonished.*" He intimates, then, that nothing would benefit them while they took delight in their vices, and increasingly hardened themselves; for God would deprive them of their craftiness, and cast them down with terror, however secure and perverse they were now.

By the third word he sets forth the manner in which they would be treated: God would have his snares by which he would take them. He alludes to the subterfuges in which those hypocrites trust, who proudly oppose God, while they think that by their arts they can escape in this or that way, and often devise some new schemes by which they may deceive God. Hence the Prophet, alluding to their perverse cunning, says, that God would be as it were a fowler, who would ensnare them, and hold them captive.

He afterwards assigns the reason, *Because they had repudiated,* or despised or rejected,[2] (for the verb means all these things,) *the word of Jehovah.* And he uses a demon-

[1] It would be better to consider the *shame* in this verse as referring to the people, and the *want* of shame in verse 12, as applied to the teachers, the scribes, the false interpreters of the law, who promised peace, while there was no peace.—*Ed.*

[2] The verb is here followed by ב: see note on chap. ii. 37.

strative particle, *Behold*, that they might not, as usual, make any evasions: "The thing," he says, "is sufficiently known, and even children can be judges of your impiety, that you have rejected the word of Jehovah." He draws hence this inference, *What does wisdom avail them?* or, What is their wisdom? Either of these meanings may be admitted, They were wise to no purpose, while they provoked God by their impious contempt. "I hate the wise who is not wise for himself," is an old proverb. As then the Jews ill consulted their own benefit, by rejecting the word of God, in which their safety was involved, the Prophet justly alleges, that their wisdom availed them nothing. Others read, "What is their wisdom," when there is no fear of God? And doubtless it ever remains a truth, that the fear of God is the beginning and the chief part of wisdom. (Prov. i. 7; ix. 10; Ps. cxi. 10.) Since then they had basely despised God's word, rightly does the Prophet ask, "What is their wisdom?" But there is a third meaning which is suitable, even this, *And wisdom, what to them?* So it is literally,—What is wisdom to them? He still speaks to them ironically, as though he said, "They are indeed wise, but in their own esteem; they have therefore no need of being taught: What then is wisdom to them!" The meaning is, that they were so swollen with pride that they received no instruction. How so? They refused wisdom through the false conceit with which they were inflated. Let, however, every one choose for himself; my object is to shew what I mostly approve. There will be no lecture to-morrow, as a consistory is to be held.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou ceasest not daily to rouse us, as also our sloth requires continual warnings,—O grant, that we may not be unteachable, and that our perverseness may not hinder us to return immediately and willingly to thee, from whom we have, through our own fault, alienated ourselves: and may we not only feel some desire to repent, but persevere so constantly in the exercise of penitence, that through the whole course of our life we may contend with our lusts, until having at length subdued them all, we shall reach the goal which has been

set before us, and enjoy in heaven that eternal inheritance, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. —Amen.

Lecture Thirty-Third.

10. Therefore will I give their wives unto others, *and* their fields to them that shall inherit *them*: for every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness; from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.

10. Propterea dabo uxores eorum alienis, et agros eorum possessoribus; quia à parvo usque ad magnum omnes cupiditatem concupiverunt (*vel*, cupiditate concupiverunt;) à propheta usque ad sacerdotem omnes egerunt fallaciter.

God here threatens punishment, because he found that he effected nothing, and that he had to do with an obstinate people, having before tried whether they were reclaimable. Having seen that exhortations were of no avail, he now comes to extreme severity, *I will give*, he says, *their wives to strangers*. He sets forth, by a particular instance, the evils which usually accompany wars: and nothing is more distressing than when the wife is snatched away from her husband; for if husbands had their option, they would prefer instant death than to bear such a disgrace. Jeremiah then shews that the most atrocious thing that happens to conquered nations was nigh the Jews,—that their men would be deprived of their wives. He afterwards says the same thing of their fields; God declares that he would give the *fields to their possessors*. By this mode of speaking he intimates, that they would be deprived of their fields, not for a short time, but perpetually.

There is, indeed, a contrast here implied: for it sometimes happens, that enemies prevail and plunder everything; but yet they take no long possession of the fields, for a change succeeds: but when he calls enemies possessors, he means that there would be such a calamity, that the Jews would for a long time, even for their life, be banished from their country, and would lose their possessions. They thought that the land was so given to them, that it could never be taken from them: and doubtless the Lord would have never expelled them, had they not defiled it with their pollutions; but as they had polluted it by their sins, they deserved to

be banished from it. So the Prophet shews that their confidence was absurd, in thinking that they would be the perpetual inheritors of that land: "Succeed you," he says, "shall others, who shall possess it as it were by an hereditary right." We now perceive the Prophet's meaning.

He afterwards mentions the reason why God had resolved to deal so severely with them, *For they are*, he says, *from the least to the greatest given up to avarice.*[1] He means that no equity prevailed among the people; for under one kind of sin he includes all frauds and plunders, and every kind of injustice. He then says, that every one was addicted to his own gain, so that they practised mutual wrongs without any regard to what was right and just.

He then enlarges on the subject and says, *that all, from the prophet to the priest, acted deceitfully.* There is here also a part mentioned for the whole. But Jeremiah in various ways sets forth the wrongs by which men harassed one another. Nor does he exclude violence when he speaks of fraud; but it is the same as though he said, that they, being forgetful of what was right, practised fraud of every kind. It was, indeed, a dreadful thing, that there remained no rectitude or justice in the prophets and the priests, who ought to have carried light for others, and to have shewn to them the right way, as God had constituted them to be the leaders of the people. Since, then, even these acted deceitfully, there must have been among the common people the most disgraceful injustice. Hence the Prophet shews by these words, that God could not be charged with too much rigour, as though he treated the people cruelly; for there was such a mass of wickedness, that it could no longer be borne. It follows—

[1] It would be more suitable to render "for" because, as it is explanatory of לכן, "for this," or, for this reason, at the beginning of the verse. This illative, and others too, are often used anticipatively,—

For this reason, give will I
Their wives to strangers, their fields to inheritors;
Because from the least even to the greatest,
Every one covets gain;
From the prophet even to the priest,
Every one practises deception.—*Ed.*

11. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace.

10. Et curarunt vulnus filiæ populi mei super nihilo, dicendo, Pax, pax; et nulla pax.

The Prophet repeats what we have noticed in the sixth chapter: but it was necessary to reiterate often, to the deaf and the slothful, what had already been forgotten, or what had not touched their hearts. As these things have been already explained, I shall now only refer briefly to the main points.

He no doubt condemns here the priests and the prophets. He spoke before generally of the whole people, "from the least," he said, "to the greatest." But as for the sake of amplifying, he had expressly mentioned the prophets and the priests as given to fraudulent dealings, he now in an especial manner condemns them, not only for grievously offending God, but also for deceiving others by their flatteries, as though they were allowed to sin with impunity. It is, indeed, an inexcusable crime in those, who ought to lead others, to be no less wicked than the common people; for they not only by their example, but also by their doctrine, corrupt the whole community, and thus they increase the evil twofold. It was therefore an intolerable impiety, when they were so presumptuous as to spread those falsehoods, by which they led the people to despise God and his law. Hence he says, that they *healed the wound* of the people, while God was yet shewing tokens of his wrath. And he speaks, as it has been said elsewhere, by way of concession, as though he had said, that they were very foolish physicians in applying plaisters to cover the wrath of God.[1]

Behold, he says, *they have healed the wound of my people*, saying, *Peace, peace.* By mentioning the word twice the Prophet shews more clearly how supine was their security; for they deceived the people not only once, but proceeded obstinately in the work of deceiving the wretched people by their false promises. He adds, *When there was no peace.* This may be taken in two ways,—that God by the event exposed their madness,—or, that when there was no pros-

[1] See note on chap. vi. 14.

perity, they still fallaciously promised peace. As God elsewhere complains that the prophets flattered the people, so he does here: such sentences we have already often explained. He then adds—

12. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

12. An pudor (*est enim interrogativè hoc legendum, sicuti capite sexto diximus, subaudienda igitur est particula,* An; An *ergo* pudefacti sunt) quod abominationem patrarunt? etiam in pudore non pudefacti sunt, et erubescere non noverunt; propterea cadent inter cadentes; in tempore visitationis ipsorum impingent (*vel,* corruent,) dicit Jehova.

The Prophet in these words shews still more clearly that they were wholly irreclaimable; for they had divested themselves of every shame. It is no doubt a proof of a wickedness past all remedy, when no shame remains. This verse has been also explained in the sixth chapter; it forms the fifteenth verse. But we must bear in mind the design of the Prophet. It is then briefly this,—to shew that the wickedness of the people was unhealable, and for this reason, because they had an iron front.

Hence he asks, *Have they been ashamed, because they have committed abomination?* as though he had said, "They have been proved guilty of wickedness, can they be made to feel any shame?" To this he answers, *Even in their shame they are not ashamed.* The particle גַּם, *gam*, even, is emphatic. Then the meaning may be thus given,—that when God brought against them their shameful conduct, and proved them guilty, so that they could not escape by any evasion—that when they were thus convicted, they yet had no feeling of shame. At the same time, this passage may be explained as referring to what is commonly called actual conviction; for they were well-nigh consumed with miseries, through their untameable perverseness, while contending with God's judgment. *Even* then *in shame itself they had no feeling of shame.*

Added is the reason, *They know not how to blush.* By this want of shame, then, Jeremiah proves that they were men past remedy. And on this account he adds, *Fall therefore shall they among those who fall, and in the time of their*

visitation they shall perish, or stumble. By these words he intimates that they were no longer to be reasoned with, and that God's vengeance would be just in wholly destroying them, for he had in vain spoken to them, he had in vain contended with them, he had in vain tried to bring them to the right way. The import of the whole then is,—that the only thing that remained for them was destruction; for they had without shame rejected all instruction and every warning.

And he says, *among the fallen,* because every one, as it is commonly the case, encouraged others in their contempt of God, and in their perverseness. When therefore they saw others to be like themselves, they entertained hope of impunity; and hence they were allured to sin by this deception. On this account the Prophet says, that ruin was nigh them all. *They shall fall,* he says, *among the fallen,*[1] *and stumble in the time of their visitation.* He shews that God had fixed a day in which they were to be destroyed. But if he deferred the time, there was no reason for them to think that it would be to their advantage; for they would by their obstinacy procure for themselves a heavier judgment. In short, though God might spare them for a time, yet the Prophet warns them, that this would avail them nothing, as God's time of visitation was fixed. Then follows a confirmation—

[1] This may be differently understood. There are here throughout the passage two parties spoken of,—the people, and the priests together with the prophets. The "wise" men, in verse 9, made ashamed were the people deluded by the priests and prophets. Those who felt no shame, mentioned in this verse, though their words proved false, were the priests and prophets: and hence we see the import of this expression here, that they were appointed to fall with the fallen, that punishment would reach them as well as the people.

This verse is somewhat different from the fifteenth of the sixth chapter, and may be thus rendered,—

12. Have they been ashamed,
Because they have done abomination?
Even with shame they are not ashamed,
And how to blush they know not:
Therefore fall shall they with the fallen;
At the time of their visitation
They shall perish, saith Jehovah.

The "abomination" was the perversion of the law so as to justify idolatry and all kinds of wickedness.—*Ed.*

13. I will surely consume them, saith the Lord: *there shall be* no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf shall fade; and *the things that* I have given them shall pass away from them.

13. Colligendo colligam (*vel*, perdendo perdam,) dicit Jehova: non uvæ in vite (*vel*, botri,) et non ficus in ficulnea; et folium decidet, et dabo illis, transibunt (*hoc est*, quæ dedero illis transibunt ab ipsis.)

He confirms, as I have said, what he had declared in the last verse. He had said, that there would be the ruin of the whole people: for the same purpose he now adds, *Destroying I will destroy them.* The verb אָסֹף, *asaph*, properly means "to collect," but metaphorically, "to destroy;" as we say in our language, *Trousser; Je les trousserai tous ensemble.* And hence it more fully appears, that the Prophet explains what he had said, that destruction was nigh them all, so that none would remain, that is, with regard to the people as a body, as a community; for God ever preserved a remnant. We have, indeed, said elsewhere, and we shall have to notice the same thing often again, that the prophets, regarding the people as a body, threatened them all with destruction; but when they addressed the elect and the faithful, they added a modification: *Destroying I will* then *destroy them.*

He afterwards shews the manner: *No grapes* shall be *on the vines*, and *no figs on the fig-trees.* The word for "fig" means the fruit as well as the tree, as it is well known. And that he might more fully set forth God's vengeance, he says, that the very leaves would wither. The meaning is, that God would soon come as an avenger, however securely the Jews might be resting in their sins: and he shews the kind of vengeance that awaited them,—that God would deprive them of all sustenance and support; by mentioning a part for the whole, he includes everything necessary for life. He speaks not of wine, and of corn, and of oil; but by figs and grapes, as I have said, he comprehends every kind of sustenance; and even the leaves would wither and fall.

In the second place, he adds, *Even what I shall give them shall pass away from them.* Some apply this to the fruit in the granaries and cellars, as though he had said, "Even if they should have provisions in their storehouses and cellars, and be furnished with plenty, all this shall yet

avail them nothing, for it shall be all taken away; for to pass away has often this meaning; and the ם, *mem*, affixed, is the same as though it was מֵהֶם, *meem*, from them. Others render the words, "they shall pass over them;" but this is too strained. They refer to the precepts granted to the Jews, which they had rendered void or neglected: but this cannot suit the passage. And as to the first explanation, it seems to me too limited. I therefore take this to be the meaning,—"Even if the grapes and figs come to maturity, yet what they shall consider as already prepared shall be taken away." The Prophet then means, that there would be various ways by which the Jews would be reduced to penury and want; for either the enemies would rob them of their grapes and figs, or he himself would send sterility; or, when they thought their provisions secured to them, they would not yet be allowed to enjoy them. This is the import of the whole.[1] It follows—

14. Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there; for the Lord our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord.

14. Ut quid nos sedemus? congregate vos, et ingrediamur urbes munitas (urbes munitionis, *ad verbum*,) et quiescamus illic: certè Jehova Deus noster silere nos (*vel*, quiescere nos) fecit, et potavit nos aquis venenatis (*vel*, aquis fellis; *nam* רֹאשׁ *significat* fel et venenum;) quia impiè egimus contra Jehovam.

This verse, and those which follow, are explained in different ways; but I will briefly shew the meaning of the Prophet. I have no doubt but that he speaks here in the name of the whole people. The Prophet, then, in these words, represents what occupied their minds, and the counsels which the Jews adopted: and further, there is no doubt but

[1] The verse may be thus rendered,—

13. I will gather their ingathering, saith Jehovah:
No grapes *shall be* on the vine,
And no figs on the fig-tree,
Even the leaf *shall* fade away;
For I will give *these* to those *who* shall pass through them.

God threatens the Jews with the deprivation of the fruits of the earth. He would gather their fruits by means of their enemies, such as would pass through them; and there would be no fruits for them. As to the last line, it is a common thing in Hebrew to leave out the relative "who" before a verb in the future tense. So it is in *Welsh*—

Canys rhoddav y *rhain* iddynt hwy a dramwyant trwyddynt.

The most literal and the most suitable to the context is this rendering.—*Ed.*

that he shews in these words that they, as hypocrites are wont to do, had recourse to expedients, by which they thought they could protect themselves from God's wrath. For they who think that the Prophet spoke his own sentiments are greatly mistaken: on the contrary, he relates here the purposes which the Jews formed; and at the same time he reproves their hardness in turning here and there, and in thinking that they could turn aside the judgment of God; for hypocrites, unless constrained, never ascend to the first cause; that is, they never acknowledge nor regard the hand of him who strikes them, as it is said in another place. (Is. ix. 13.) They indeed feel their evils, and seek to apply remedies; but they stop at the nearest reliefs, without seeking to pacify God and to return into favour with him; and when the smallest hope is given them, they think themselves to be safe, if they betake themselves to this or that hiding-place.

This feeling is what the Prophet describes: *Why do we sit?* or, "Why do we rest?" But the word here means to sit still: *Why do we* then *sit still?* as though they had accused themselves of sloth or idleness: "What means this our slothfulness? we sit still in the villages, which are exposed to the violence of enemies: *gather* then yourselves, and let us *enter* into fortified cities; we shall rest there." They thought that they should be safe, if they entered into fortified cities. Then, on the other hand, Jeremiah shews how foolishly they trusted to such refuges. *Surely*, he says, *our God hath made us silent.* He had said before ונרמה־שם, *vanudame-shem*, "and we shall there rest." The verb דמה, *dame*, means to rest, and to be silent. He repeats the same word, "Surely, our God hath made us to be silent;" but in a different sense. There is then a striking allusion in the verb דמה, *dame*, or the sameness of sound. "Jehovah hath made us to be silent," or to rest; or, he hath cut us off, for in Hiphil, it has this meaning.[1]

[1] The verb דמה means, to be silent, to be reduced to silence; and the silence is that of inactivity, or of weakness, or of death. The silence of inactivity seems to be the meaning in the first instance, and the silence of weakness in the second: "Let us be silent," or, let us rest; "God hath made us silent," or, made us feeble, or, reduced to nothing our strength:—

14. Why do we sit still? be ye assembled,
And let us go into fortified cities,

We hence see, that on the one hand is declared what might have given some comfort to the Jews, for there were fortified cities which might have protected them from the assaults of enemies; but, on the other hand, the Prophet shews that they were greatly mistaken, for God would make them to rest in a different manner, as he would reduce them to nothing; for the dead are said to rest, or to be silent. In short, he means a quiet state when speaking in the name of the people; but he refers to destruction when speaking by God's command.

He afterwards confirms the same thing in a metaphorical language, *God will give them the waters of gall*, or, poisoned waters: and he adds, *Because they have acted impiously against Jehovah.* We may learn from this last part, that the Prophet is now performing the duty of his office. The people indeed never willingly allowed that they were suffering punishment justly due to their sins; but the Prophet here reproves them for hoping to be safe by fleeing to fortified cities, as though God could not follow them there. He then says that God's vengeance would closely pursue them, and that wherever they fled, they would still be exposed to evils, for they carried with them their impieties, which would draw upon them the wrath of God. It follows—

15. We looked for peace, but no good *came; and* for a time of health, and behold trouble!	15. Expectando[1] pacem (*vel*, ad pacem) et non bonum; ad tempus sanationis, et ecce terror (*aut*, turbatio.)

And let us be silent there;
For Jehovah our God has reduced us to silence;
And he has given us to drink the water of hemlock,
Because we have sinned against Jehovah.

That רֹאשׁ is "hemlock," or some poisonous herb, is evident from Hos. x. 4. "The water" seems to be the juice in this instance—"the juice of hemlock." It is rendered "the water of gall, ὕδωρ χολῆς," by the *Septuagint*, and the same by the *Vulgate;* "bitter waters," by the *Syriac;* "water of bitterness," by the *Arabic;* "the cup of malediction," by the *Targum.* "Water of hemlock" is the rendering of *Blayney.*

Horsley renders the third and the fourth line as follows:—

And let us there sit in despair,
Since the Lord our God hath brought us to despair.—*Ed.*

[1] The word is קִוָּה, hoping, or longing, rendered by all the ancient versions, as though it were in the first person plural. It may be taken as a noun,—

The hope *was* for peace, but *there was* no good!
For a time of healing, but behold terror!—*Ed.*

He explains his meaning more clearly in this verse,—that the Jews in vain flattered themselves, while they entertained vain hopes. He then says that there was no reason for them to deceive themselves; for were they to promise themselves peace a hundred times, ruin would still be nigh them, and that though they hoped for a time of healing, terror would assail them. We hence see that in the last verse his purpose was to shew how foolish the people were, who thought that they would be safe by means of the remedies which seemed to be at hand, though they despised God's judgment. It follows—

16. The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones: for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

16. A Dan auditus est fremitus equorum ejus, à voce hinnituum robustorum ejus tremefacta est (*vel*, contremuit) tota terra; quia venient (*nam copula hic resolvi debet in causalem particulam*) et comedent terram et plenitudinem (*vel*, copiam) ejus, urbem et habitatores ejus.

He says, *Heard has been the snorting of horses from Dan.* Dan was on the extremities, as it is well known, of the land of Canaan. Some think that the loudness of the noise is intended, as it was heard from such a distance in the holy city itself; but I know not whether this can be gathered from the words of the Prophet. The simpler and the correcter meaning then is, that though Jerusalem rested securely, they were not yet in a quiet state on the borders of the land, for they were disturbed by the snorting of the enemies' horses. *From Dan* then *has been heard a snorting.* When the inhabitants of a city indulge in pleasures, while the borders of the land are assailed by enemies, it might be pertinently said to them, "Why do ye here live at your ease? your neighbours and your brethren are exposed to the assaults of enemies: war therefore ought to be waged in your land, though it has not yet reached your gates and your walls." So the Prophet speaks here: "From Dan has been heard the snorting of his horses." The relative "his" may be applied to the Assyrians; for the Hebrews often use relatives without antecedents. But it is more probable that Jeremiah refers to the first mover of the war, even God; as though he had said,—"God will send forth hostile armies, which will dis-

turb the borders of your land." He then calls them the horses of God; for the Chaldeans did not wage that war, but under the authority of God, as we have often seen, and shall have to notice often again.

Then he says, *At the noise of the neighings of his strong ones*, &c. He calls the horses "strong," אבירים, *abirim;* and as he had not described them, he now does so. *Trembled*, he says, *has the land at the noise of the neighings of his strong ones.* As he mentions the neighings of horses, we must understand "strong" as referring to the horses themselves. *Come*, he says, *shall they, and shall devour the land and its fulness, the city and its inhabitants.* Here is an irregularity as to the number; for he puts city for cities, as he threatens not only Jerusalem, but also the neighbouring cities. Whatever then might be the abundance in the land, the enemies would devour it; and he says also, that they would devour the cities and their inhabitants. It follows—

17. For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which *will* not *be* charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord.

17. Quia ecce ego mitto in vos serpentes, regulos (*quidam tamen subaudiunt copulam*, serpentes et regulos) quibus nulla erit incantatio, et mordebunt vos, dicit Jehova.

He increases their terror by another comparison,—that not only enemies would violently attack them, but that their bitings would be venomous. He had spoken of horses, and mentioned their violent onsets; but he now expresses another thing,—that the Jews would have to carry on war with *vipers* and *basilisks.* The Prophet no doubt only meant to shew that they could not possibly escape; for as from serpents men can hardly escape, especially when they are numerous, and assail them on every side, so he intimates, that the war would be fatal to the Jews, when attacked by serpents and vipers.

They shall bite you, he says, *and for them* there will be *no incantation;* that is, by no means can they be driven away from you. If one asks, Can serpents be driven away by incantations? the answer is,—that the Prophet here does not refer to what is true, but speaks according to the common opinions of men. It has been thought in all ages, that serpents can be driven away by incantations, or be killed, or

be deprived of the power of hurting. "The deadly snake," says Virgil, in Eclo. viii., "is dissolved in the meadows by singing." What that heathen poet has said has been believed also by other nations; and as I have already said, it has been a commonly received opinion that serpents may be charmed. As then it was a common belief, the Prophet says, "If ye think that these serpents can be turned away, and the hurt that proceeds from them, ye are greatly deceived; for there will be for them no incantation." There is also a mention made of incantation in Ps. lviii. 6: but as I have already said, the prophets accommodate their words to the comprehension of men. The Prophet does here also indirectly reprove the Jews, by comparing their false resources to incantations, as though he had said,—"Ye think that ye can soothe your enemies by flatteries and bribery, so that they may not hurt you; and ye also think that ye have ready at hand various means by which you may avert the evils which impend over you: in vain, he says, ye deceive yourselves with such hopes; for all your incantations as to these serpents shall be to no purpose, and wholly useless."

We now then perceive the Prophet's intention, and see that by this figure he ironically derides the crafty measures of the people, and all the remedies which they thought they had in readiness when assailed by their enemies. It follows—

18. *When* I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart *is* faint in me.	18. Roborare meum (*vel*, quum vellem roborare me) super dolorem, super me cor meum infirmum est.

Interpreters explain differently the word מבלגיתי, *mebelgiti*. Some take מ, *mem*, in the sense of ב, *beth*; but others, with whom I agree, regard it as a servile, deriving the word from בלג, *belag*; and this letter is prefixed to it to shew that it is a noun. The ת, *tau*, also at the end, is a servile.[1]

[1] The ancient versions and the *Targum* all differ as to the meaning of this word; and it is difficult to make the original to agree with any of them. The word, as in the received text, is a verbal noun from Hiphil, with a *iod* affixed to it, and is either a personal noun in the feminine gender, "my consoler," or "strengthener," meaning his own soul,—or a common noun, "my consolation," or "strength," meaning God. But *Schultens*, regarding the verb as signifying to smile or to laugh, and thinking that it

The Prophet then means, that he sought *strength in his sorrow,* but that his *heart was weak.* He no doubt, I think, sets forth in this verse the perverse character of the people, —that they sought through their obstinacy to drive away every punishment. This could not indeed be referred to himself, or to those who were like him, as we know how fearful are God's servants with regard to his wrath; for as the fear of God prevails in their hearts, so they are easily terrified by his judgment; but hypocrites and wicked men ever harden themselves as far as they can. They then strengthened themselves against God, and thought in this way to be conquerors. Since they thus perversely contended with God, the Prophet sets forth here the great hardness of the people: *I would,* he says, *strengthen myself in my sorrow; but my heart is within me weak;* that is, "In vain are these remedies tried; in vain have ye hitherto endeavoured to strengthen yourselves, and have sought fortresses and strongholds against God; for sorrow will at length prevail, as the Lord will add troubles to troubles, so that ye must at length succumb under them."

He means the same when he says, his *heart* was within him *weak:* "I have," he says, "been oppressed with sorrow, when I thought I had strength enough to resist." For thus the ungodly think manfully to act, when they madly resist God; but at length they find by the event that they in vain seek thus to strengthen themselves; for our heart, he says, will become within us weak, and debility itself will at last oppress and overwhelm us.

means here the laugh of misery or of contempt, renders it "O thou (*i.e.,* the daughter of Sion) that grinnest at me for pain," and sayest, "within me the heart is sick." The *Targum* seems to favour this view, as it mentions the division of the people. *Blayney,* according to several copies, divides the word thus, מבלי ניתי, and considers the one as a negative, and the other a verbal noun from נהה, to heal, and renders the verse thus:—

Sorrow is upon me past my remedying,
My heart within me is faint.

Still the simplest way, and the most suitable to the passage, is to take the word as a common noun, signifying consolation, comfort or strength, and to consider the words as addressed to God,—

My strength! within me *is* sorrow,
Within me *is* my heart faint.

"Faint," that is, through grief. It is rendered "grieve," or "is sorrowful," by all the ancient versions and the *Targum.—Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we have been abundantly taught by ancient examples how insane they are who bend not under thy threatenings, and repent not in due time while thou invitest them to repentance,—O grant, that we may wholly give up ourselves to be disciplined by thee, and that we may not only bear with submissive minds to be chastised, but also learn by thy warnings to return without delay to thee, and that we may so remain in obedience to thee, that with unceasing perseverance we may fight under thy banner, until having at length finished our warfare, we shall enjoy that blessed rest which has been prepared for us by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture Thirty-Fourth.

19. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: *Is* not the Lord in Zion? *is* not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, *and* with strange vanities?

19. Ecce vox clamoris filiæ populi mei à terra longinqua, An Jehova non est in Sion? an rex ejus non est in ea? Quare provocarunt me ad iram in suis sculptilibus? in vanitatibus alieni?

THE Prophet in this verse assumes different characters: he first denounces ruin, which, though near, was not yet dreaded by the people; he then represents the people, and relates what they would say; in the third place, he adds an answer in God's name to check the clamours of the people.

When he says that the *daughter* of his *people* uttered a *cry*, he is to be understood as referring to a future time; for the Jews as yet continued perversely in their sins, and ridiculed all threatenings, and regarded as nothing what was said by the prophets. Jeremiah then does not mean that his own nation cried, as though they dreaded future calamities, (for they were heedlessly secure;) but he condemns their indifference, as though he had said, "Ye indeed do now indulge your own delusions, and think that your felicity is to be perpetual; but in a short time your cry will be heard." The words, *From a distant land*, interpreters apply to the Chaldeans and Assyrians, as though the Prophet had said, "Ye hope for a perpetual rest, because your enemies are far from you; hence distance and delay in marching pro-

duce this security in you; for it seems not to you credible that your enemies shall make such a journey, except with much expense and much trouble; but in this opinion you are deceived; for though the Chaldeans and the Assyrians are far distant from you, yet they shall soon come and constrain you to utter a cry: ye cannot now bear the warnings of the prophets, my voice ye cannot endure; but God will constrain you to utter a different voice, for ye shall cry, but without any avail."

This meaning is not without reason on its side: if then the Prophet's words be thus taken, I offer no objection; for hypocrites derive confidence from the present appearance of things; when they see that there is quietness on every side, they fear no danger; when God threatens them, and shews not immediately his rods, they ridicule or despise them: thus have we seen in other places.

But another meaning is not unsuitable,—that Jeremiah describes the lamentations of the people in exile, after having been driven into Chaldea and Assyria: *The voice*, then, *of the daughter of my people from a distant land*;[1] that is, after having been deprived of their country, they will then begin to cry, and for this reason, because they wished the prophets to give them rest, and refused to bear any reproofs. Appropriate also is this view; but I prefer the former,—that the people would shortly find out how foolishly they deluded themselves, when God by his servants threatened them with ruin and destruction: and hence he uses the demonstrative particle, "Behold:" *Behold*, he says, *the voice of crying;* and yet great was the silence then at Jerusalem: for though in their pleasure they uttered some voices, yet as to weepings and lamentations the whole city was silent. The Prophet then refers to what was hidden. But God usually acts in this way, as he afterwards executes suddenly his judgment; for when the wicked say, Peace, peace, destruction comes and suddenly overwhelms them. (1 Thess. v. 8.)

[1] Literally it is, "The voice of the shout of the daughter of my people," four words in succession, and three in regimine by juxtaposition. The *Welsh* is exactly the same, "Llev gwaedd merch vy mhobl"—Voice shout daughter my people.—*Ed.*

He adds in the second place, *Is not Jehovah in Sion? Is not her king in her?* The Prophet no doubt expresses here the complaints of the people on finding themselves overwhelmed with so many and so great evils, without receiving any aid from heaven. For hypocrites ever expostulate with God; and as they consider that they are unjustly chastised, they reject every instruction, and avoid it as much as they can; in short, they seek stupidity, that they may deceive themselves with vain delusions. As then it is usual with hypocrites to reject every apprehension of God's wrath, Jeremiah strikingly describes their contumacy, "Is not Jehovah in Sion? Is not her king in her?" For they accused God of falsehood, as though he had deceived them, since he had promised to be the defender of the city, and of the whole land. As then they thought that God was bound to them by this promise, they daringly raged against him, "What means this? for God has chosen this place, where Abraham's race might worship him; it has been as it were his earthly kingdom: but now what can this mean, that enemies are coming here? Can God ever permit them to do so? This is not possible, except God himself be overcome."

We hence see the import of the Prophet's words; for he here imitates the perverse language of the people, and recites the words which he knew most of them used. We have before found him addressing them, "Trust not in words of falsehood, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah," (chap. vii. 4;) for they were wont perversely to allege against God, the temple, and to regard it as a shield to ward off every evil. In the same way the Prophet says now, "Is not God in Sion?" and then, "Is not her king in her?" The Jews were not only persuaded that God would be propitious to them, but they doubted not of their own safety, while they could turn their eyes to their king. They therefore uttered these words, as though they were beyond the chance of danger: for we know what God had declared respecting the kingdom, that it would continue for ever: So long as the sun and moon shall be in heaven, shall remain the seat of David, and his posterity flourish. (Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37.) Hence they con-

nected the king with God; as though they had said, "Here is God worshipped, and his power dwells in the temple; the king also, whom he has set over us, is a sure pledge of his favour; and the perpetuity of his kingdom has been promised to us: it then follows, that either God is untrue, and that we have been deceived with vain promises, or that our enemies will come in vain; for when they shall make every effort, God, who is the guardian of our safety, will easily drive them away."

At the first view this seems to be an evidence of faith, as the people seemed persuaded that they should be safe and secure under the protection of God, and as they turned their eyes to that kingdom, which was a remarkable exhibition of God's presence: for as David was a type of Christ, and also his posterity, no other refuge could have been sought by the faithful than that which is here described. But we know how hypocrites swell with vain confidence, while yet they are wholly destitute of faith, and how they become wantonly insolent whenever God threatens them, as though they held him bound at their will. As then the ungodly are wont thus to abuse the name of God, it is no wonder that they imitate the language of his true servants: but yet they are wholly different. How so? They lay hold on the promises, but they have no faith nor repentance. "This is my rest for ever: it then follows that we shall be ever safe, for God cannot be overcome by any force of arms, by any onset of enemies; since he has taken us under his protection, what have we to fear?" But, at the same time, they despised God and all his teaching.

We hence see how foolish was the boasting of that people, since they wholly despised the holy name of God, and did swell only with wind, inasmuch as they were altogether destitute of faith and piety. We must also ever keep in mind what I have already said,—that the Jews not only entertained this vain confidence, but also presumptuously rose up against God, as though he had deceived them, having promised that Sion would be his perpetual rest: they now ask him, why he did not defend the city, as he dwelt in Sion? and why was not the king their protection, since it had been

said, "So long as the sun and moon shall be in heaven, shall remain the throne of David?" Now follows God's answer.

Why then *have they provoked me with their carvings, and the vanities of the foreigner?* Here God retorts their false complaints. We hence learn, that in the last clause the contumacy of the people is what is set forth by Jeremiah: they raged against God, because he did not aid them in time. God shews how absurdly they complained against him, and accused him: *Why*, he says, *have they provoked me?* "They say now that they are forsaken, because there is no faithfulness in me: I have not betrayed them, nor forsaken them, but they have forsaken me." We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. We observe, indeed, that the passage is abrupt, for the Prophet assumes different characters; but as to what is meant there is nothing doubtful.

God says, that he was *provoked with carvings:* it hence follows, that the temple was polluted. God had indeed promised to dwell in the temple, but on a certain condition, provided he was faithfully, and in a legitimate manner, worshipped there; but the people with their pollutions had defiled the temple. God then shews that there was a just cause why he had departed, according to what is set forth more fully in the tenth chapter of Ezekiel: God shews to his servant in that vision that he had left the temple, and for this reason,—because his holiness could not be blended with ungodly and filthy profanations. He first mentions *carvings* generally, and then he adds, *the vanities of the foreigner:* and here he amplifies the sin of the people, because they borrowed here and there from foreigners such superstitions as were unknown to their fathers, as though they wished to banish God from the temple, and from the whole land.[1] It follows—

[1] The meaning of this verse is viewed by some differently. Their exile is considered as referred to at the beginning of the verse, "from a distant land,"—or literally, "from the land of the remote ones." All the versions render the preposition "from," and not "because of," as in our version. The Prophet contemplates them as in banishment, and relates what they would say, and what answer God had for them: and they seem to have been thus contemplated to the end of the chapter,—

19. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people
From the land of the remote ones,—

20. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

20. Transiit messis, finita est æstas, et nos non sumus servati.

The Prophet shews now in the name of the people what was the hinderance. At the time Jeremiah spoke, the Jews confidently boasted that God was their defender; and they did not think that the Chaldeans were preparing for an expedition. But as they were inflated with false confidence, the Prophet here recites what they would presently say, *Passed has the harvest, ended has the summer, and we have not been saved;* that is, "We thought that the associates, with whom we have made alliances, would at length come to our aid; and we have in this respect been deceived." In saying, that the harvest had passed, some think that they expected help from the Egyptians after they had gathered their corn into barns; for there is then more leisure, and then also there are provisions for the army. But the Prophet seems to include the whole time suitable for carrying on war; as though he had said, "What will become of us at last? for if the Egyptians intended to bring help, they would have done so at the suitable time of the year; but passed has the harvest, and the summer has ended: will they come now, when the severity of winter constrains them to keep at home?"

It is the same as though they had said, "There is no hope of aid either from the Egyptians or from other confederates, for the seasonable time is gone by." There was nothing less credible to the Jews at that time; for as it has elsewhere appeared, they doubted not but that the Egyp-

"*Was* not Jehovah in Sion?
Was not her king within her?"
"Why! they provoked me with their carved images,
With the vanities of the foreigner."

Then follows the continuation of the cry in exile,—

20. "Passed has the harvest,
Ended has the summer,
And we have not been saved!"

The "King," in verse 19, is "Jehovah" in the former line. "The vanities of the foreigner" were idols: they were vanities, because they could do nothing, neither good nor evil. What made them gods were the imaginations of the infatuated and superstitious. The gods of many now are nothing better. Every notion of God is false but what is consistent with his word. The Socinian god is not the true God; it is the fiction of a perverted mind. Nor is the god of the thorough Papists anything better, nor the god of the Pharisee.—*Ed.*

tians would bring them aid, and supply them with help instead of God: but the Prophet intimates, that whatever the Egyptians might have promised would be in vain, and wholly useless, that the people would at length find out by experience that their promises were mere trumperies, yea, impostures and deceits. In short, he describes in the name of the people (that what he said might be more emphatical) what they would soon find out, though they would not believe it at that time. It follows—

21. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.

21. Super contritione filiæ populi mei contritus sum, obtenebratus sum, stupor (*nam* שמם *est stupere et attonitum esse;* stupor *ergo*) apprehendit me.

As the hardness of the people was so great, that the threatenings we have observed did not touch them, the Prophet now ascribes to himself what he had before attributed to them. We then see how the Prophet varies his mode of speaking; but it was necessary, for he was at a loss to find a way to address them sufficiently strong to penetrate into their stony and even iron hearts. We need not wonder, then, that there are so many figurative terms used by the Prophet; for it was needful to set before them God's judgment in various ways, that the people might be awakened out of their torpid state.

He then says, that he was *bruised for the bruising* of his people. He was no doubt ridiculed by most of them: "Oh! thou grievest for thine own evils; it is well and prosperous with us: who has asked thee for this pity? Think not, then, that thou canst gain any favour with us, for we are contented with our lot. Weep rather for thine own calamities, if thou hast any at home; but suffer us at the same time to enjoy our pleasures, since God is propitious and indulgent to us." Thus then was the Prophet derided; but yet he warns the obstinate people, that they might be less excusable: he says, that he was *rendered black;* for sorrow brings blackness with it, and makes dark the face of man: it is a metaphorical expression. He says at last, that he was *astonished.*[1] The astonishment with which he was seized he

[1] To keep throughout the metaphorical character of this verse, it ought to be rendered thus,—

no doubt sets down as being the opposite of the people's torpor and insensibility, for they had no fear for themselves. It follows—

22. *Is there* no balm in Gilead? *is there* no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?	22. An resina (*aut*, balsamus) non est in Gilead? an medicus non illic est? nam cur non ascendit sanitas filiæ populi mei?

The Prophet intimates in these words that the slaughter of the people would be so fatal that they would in vain seek remedies; as though he had said, that the disease would be incurable, and altogether deadly. The people, no doubt, ever devised for themselves many kinds of aids, according to what is commonly done; for ungodly men, when any danger appears, look around them on all sides; and when they think that they can be protected by any kind of assistance, or by any of the means they contrive, they rest secure and free from every trouble. Hence the Prophet, that he might dispel such vain confidences, says that there would *be no rosin* to heal their diseases. The rosin is a liquid which flows, not from every tree, but from the pine, and trees of that kind.

We may conclude from this passage, as well as from other passages, that the best and the most valuable rosin was found in that part of Judea, called Gilead. Indeed the whole of Judea produced rosin; but as it was more abundant in Gilead, and as that rosin was more odoriferous and more powerful, he expressly mentions that place. The word צרי, *tsari*, means also balsam: and as to this let each follow his own opinion, for the Jews themselves do not altogether agree. They who render it "treacle" wholly depart from the meaning, and offer what is absurd; for we know that

For the bruising of the daughter of my people
I was bruised, I became black;
Desolation possessed me.

But taking the words as applied to the mind, divested of metaphor, we must render them thus,—

For the sorrow of the daughter of my people
I sorrowed, I mourned;
Astonishment possessed me.

And this "astonishment" he explains in the next verse: there were means of restoration, and yet the people were not restored; at this he was astonished.—*Ed.*

treacle is made up of several ingredients: now rosin is not any sort of gum, but a thick liquid, as I have said, which belongs to trees; and from it comes rosin, and mastic, and other things; for the liquid becomes thick after it has flown from the trees.

He says then, as one astonished, *Is there not rosin in Gilead? Is there not a physician there?* But the Prophet foretells here by the Spirit, that there would be such a destruction as could not by any means be avoided, that the disease would be incurable. *For why*, he says, *does not health come to the daughter of my people?* The reason is added, because healing could not be expected by the people; not that the Jews perceived this, for, on the contrary, they boasted, as I have said, of their perfect safety. But the Prophet here declares that a deadly disease was at hand, which would inevitably destroy the wicked.[1] Afterwards follows—

[1] As the whole passage, from the 19th verse, is anticipative, and represents the case of the Jews in captivity, this verse is to be viewed in the same light, and rendered in the past tense,—

22. Was there not balm in Gilead?
Was there not a healer there?
Why then has not succeeded
The recovery of the daughter of my people?

Whether balm or rosin be meant, it makes no great difference; its healing virtues had become proverbial; and in this sense it is to be taken here. *Kimchi* held that it was balm or balsam, which *Josephus* reports was first brought to Judea by the Queen of Sheba. But the tree which produced צרי, was not an exotic, but indigenous in Judea, as it appears from Gen. xxxvii. 25, and xliii. 10; and it grew especially in Gilead, as it appears from this passage and from chap. xlvi. 11. *Bochart* maintained that rosin is meant by the word, the gum drawn from the Terebinthus or the turpentine tree, which possesses strong healing virtues. It is rendered, "ῥητίνη—rosin," by the *Septuagint*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Arabic*; and "cera—wax," by the *Syriac*. "Healer," or physician, is rendered "ἰατρὸς —healer," by the *Septuagint*, and "medicus," by the *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*. It appears that Gilead was not only celebrated for its healing gum, but also for its medical men.

The balm was the word of God, and the healer who applied it was the prophet or the teacher.

Perhaps the most literal rendering of the first two lines is the following, and the most suitable to express astonishment,—

The balm, not in Gilead!
Verily, a healer, not there!—*Ed.*

CHAPTER IX.

1. Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

1. Quis ponet caput meum aquas, et oculum meum fontem lachrymarum? et deflebo die et nocte (*hoc est*, dies et noctes) interfectos filiæ populi mei.

He follows the same subject. During times of tranquillity, when nothing but joyful voices were heard among the Jews, he bewails, as one in the greatest grief, the miseries of the people; and being not satisfied with this, he says, *Who will set*, or make, *my head waters, and my eye a fountain of tears?* He intimates by these words, that the ruin would be so dreadful that it could not be bewailed by a moderate or usual lamentation, inasmuch as God's vengeance would exceed common bounds, and fill men with more dread than other calamities.

The meaning is, that the destruction of the people would be so monstrous that it could not be sufficiently bewailed. It hence appears how hardened the Jews had become; for doubtless the Prophet had no delight in such comparisons, as though he wished rhetorically to embellish his discourse; but as he saw that their hearts were inflexible, and that a common way of speaking would be despised, or would have no weight and authority, he was constrained to use such similitudes. And at this day, there is no less insensibility in those who despise God; for however Prophets may thunder, while God spares and indulges them, they promise to themselves perpetual quietness. Hence it is, that they ridicule and insult both God and his servants, as though they were too harshly treated. As then, the same impiety prevails now in the world as formerly, we may hence learn what vehemence they ought to use whom God calls to the same office of teaching. Plain teaching, then, will ever be deemed frigid in the world, except it be accompanied with sharp goads, such as we find employed here by the Prophet.[1] He adds—

[1] This verse is connected by some with the last chapter: and it seems to belong to it. It forms in all the Hebrew MSS. the 23d verse of the

2. Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they *be* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

2. Quis statuet me in deserto, in diversorio (*alii,* tugurium, *vertunt; sed nescio an reperiatur* מלון *in hoc sensu*) viatorum? et relinquam populum meum et discedam ab illis; quia omnes adulteri, conventus transgressorum (*vel,* perfidorum; *nam* בגדים *sunt perfidi et apostatæ, ut alibi vidimus.*)

Here the Prophet entertains another wish: He had before wished that his head were waters, that he might shed tears, and he had wished his eyes to be the fountains of tears; but now, after having duly considered the wickedness of the people, he puts off every feeling of humanity, and as one incensed, he desires to move elsewhere, and wholly to leave the people; for their impiety had so prevailed that he could no longer live among them. It is indeed certain that the Prophet had no common grief, when he perceived that God's dreadful vengeance was not far distant: it is also certain that he was moved and constrained by their detestable conduct to desire to be removed elsewhere. But he speaks not only for his own sake; for he regards his own nation, and expresses his feelings, that he might more effectually touch their hearts. We must then understand, that so great was the sympathy of the Prophet, that he was not satisfied with shedding tears, but that he wished that his whole head would flow into tears. It appears, also, that he was so moved with indignation, that he wished wholly to leave his own people. But, as I have said, his object was to try whether he could restore them to the right way.

He then shews, in this verse, that the Jews had become so detestable, that all the true servants of God wished to be removed far away from them: *Who* then *will set me in the desert?* He seeks not for himself another country; he desires not to dwell in a pleasant situation, or that some commodious asylum should be offered to him? but he desires to be placed in the desert, or in the lodging of travellers. He speaks not of those lodgings or inns, which were in villages and towns; but of a lodging in the desert; according to what

preceding chapter. The phrase, מי־יתן, "who will give," means a wish, "O that my head," &c., or "May my head," &c. The *Septuagint,* the *Vulgate,* the *Arabic,* and the *Targum* express it literally, "Who will give;" but the *Syriac* has, "O, I wish my head were turned into water." —*Ed.*

is the case, when a long and tedious journey is made through forests, some sheds are formed, that when a traveller is overtaken by the darkness of night, he might be protected by some covering, and not lie down in the open air. It is of this kind of lodging that the Prophet speaks: then he no doubt means a shed; but as to the word, we may retain, as I have said, its proper meaning. What is meant is, that to dwell in the desert among wild beasts was better than to be among that abominable people. By expressing this wish he inflamed no doubt the fury of the whole people, or at least of most of them; but it was necessary thus forcibly to address them: as they submitted to no kind and wholesome warnings and counsels, they were to be forcibly stimulated and urged by such reproofs as these.

I will leave my people. This had an emphatic bearing; for delightful to every one is his native soil, and it is also delightful to dwell among one's own people. As then the Prophet wished to be removed into the desert, and to leave his own people, all his relatives and the nation from which he sprang, and to depart from them, it follows that they must have come to extremities.

And the reason is added, *For all are adulterers.* I take the word מְנָאֲפִים, *menaphim*, adulterers, in a metaphorical sense, as meaning all those who had departed from God, and abandoned themselves to ungodly superstitions, or those who had become so vitiated and corrupt as to retain no integrity. He does not then call them adulterers, because they were given to whoredoms, but because they were immersed in all kinds of defilements. He afterwards calls them *an assembly of apostates*, or of perfidious men. The word עָצַר, *otsar*, means to prohibit, to restrain: hence the noun עֲצֶרֶת, *otsaret*, means a summoned assembly, when, according to an oath or laws, men are forced to meet; and after the assembly is proclaimed, they dare not depart. Then the Prophet by this word points out the consent and union that existed among that people, as though he had said, that they no less clave to their sins, that if by a solemn rite or authority or ordinance they had been summoned together and were prohibited to depart. We hence see that he con-

demns the impious consent that was among the people, and also their pertinacity; for they could by no means be restored to a right mind. And for this reason he calls them also בגדים, *begadim*, transgressors; for by this word the Hebrews mean, not every kind of sinners, but those who are wholly wicked: and hence the prophets, when they speak of apostates and revolters, ever call them בגדים, *begadim*, as in this passage.[1] I shall not proceed farther.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased that the prophetic writings should be preserved for our use, that they may continually excite us to repentance, and that since thou stirrest up daily those who urge us by their exhortations, and draw us, as it were by force, to repent,—O grant, that there may not be in us such perverseness as we see existed in thine ancient people; but that we may render ourselves teachable, and be so moved by thy threatenings, as to anticipate thy judgment, lest we, mistaking thy forbearance, should at length be visited with that dread, described to us by thy servant Jeremiah, but that we may, on the contrary, find thee to the end to be not only a reconcilable but also a most merciful Father, until we shall at last enjoy a fuller knowledge of thy goodness in thy celestial kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

[1] This verse may be rendered thus,—

O that I had in the desert the lodging of travellers,
Then I would go away from them;
For all of them *are* adulterers,
A company of hypocrites.

He preferred living in the temporary sheds of travellers, erected in the desert, rather than to live among his own people. How intolerably wicked they must have been! "A company," or an assembly, a multitude: the word need not be deemed as retaining its primary idea. The meaning is, that the whole community, the whole people, were hypocrites; they pretended to worship and serve God, and at the same time were idolaters and treacherous and immoral in their conduct. The word for "hypocrites" is derived from one that means a garment, a cloak, a covering; and the verb means to act under a cover, to act deceitfully, or falsely, or hypocritically, or perfidiously. It is rendered "deceivers" by the *Septuagint*, "prevaricators" by the *Vulgate*, "liars" by the *Syriac*, "falsifiers" by the *Targum*, and "perfidious dealers" by *Blayney*.—*Ed.*

Lecture Thirty-Fifth.

3. And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies; but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth: for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord.

3. Et jaculati sunt lingua (*quidam vertunt*, Et jaculare fecerunt; *alii*, intenderunt linguas suas) arcum suum ad mendacia (*alii vertunt*, arcum mendacii; *sed malè*;) et non ad veritatem roborati sunt (*aut*, invaluerunt) in terra; quia à malo ad malum egressi sunt, et me non cognoscunt, dicit Jehova.

JEREMIAH confirms what he had said of the near destruction of the people; for, as we have said, the Jews ridiculed threatenings while they thought themselves far from every danger. But the Prophet shews, from the nature of God himself, that they must necessarily perish in a short time; for since God is the judge of the world, and as they were continually advancing in impiety and wickedness, they could no longer be tolerated. This is the meaning.

He first says, that they *stretched their tongues as a bow for falsehoods.* The verb דָּרַךְ, *darck*, means to walk, and often occurs in this sense; but it means also to stretch, to bend, and is frequently applied to bows. As it is here in Hiphil, some take it in a transitive sense. It ought in this case to have י, *iod;* but such defect is often found in other places. This sense is the most suitable; that is, that they shot with their tongues falsehood as with a bow. Others improperly construe שֶׁקֶר, *shikor*, in the genitive case, as though he had said, "the bow of falsehood;" but this gives no meaning; and therefore "the bow of falsehood" cannot be admitted here. The sense is, that they shot falsehood with their tongue as with a bow, or that they made their tongue to go to falsehood, or that they stretched their tongue like a bow for falsehood. If the last rendering be approved, —that they stretched their tongue, &c., then the Prophet compares their tongues to bows and falsehoods to arrows. As to the subject itself, there is no difference, whether we read that they shot lies with their tongues, or that they stretched their tongues for lies: for the Prophet simply means that their tongues, as he will hereafter tell us, were so pointed that they pierced one another with slanders and falsehoods,

as though one stretched a bow and shot an arrow. He then intimates, that all their words were deadly, for they were intent on slanders and falsehoods, so that there was no intercourse without a mortal wound.

He then adds, that they were *not strong for the truth.* Some read, "They have been strong, but not for the truth;" others, "They have been strong as to the truth," or for the truth: but I think that the Prophet's meaning is different, —that having checked the truth, they took more liberty for themselves, as though he had said that they triumphed when all faithfulness and rectitude were destroyed; for by the word, אמונה, *amune*, the Prophet no doubt means that fidelity by which men ought to carry on their concerns one with another. Since, then, there was no uprightness among them, he says, that they marched forth as victorious when they trod under foot what was just and right. It is indeed a proof of extreme impiety, when men, trampling upon faithfulness and equity, allow themselves every kind of licentiousness. Some give this explanation,—that they ruled, not through their faithfulness or virtues, for they had crept into and obtained honours by wicked and deceitful arts. And it is indeed certain that the Prophet directs his discourse, not against the common people, but against the chief men, who had attained their power by frauds. But I am satisfied with the view that I have already given,—that they had become *strong* because there was no truth, as when we say that the blind rule in darkness, when everything is in confusion. The meaning is, that they were not only given up to their sins, but that they also triumphed over fidelity and justice, by allowing themselves every liberty, as there was no one who dared to say a word to restrain them. He says, that they thus became strong through the *whole land;* for he sets forth here the deplorable state of the people in general; as though he had said, "There is no hope of deliverance left, for truth and faithfulness are everywhere oppressed."[1]

[1] The ancient versions differ in rendering the first clauses of this verse: "They have bent their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has prevailed over the land," *Septuagint;*—"And they have stretched their tongue like a bow of falsehood, and not of truth; they have become strong in the land," *Vulgate;*—"Their tongue as with their own bow have they

An explanation follows,—that they *proceeded from evil to evil;* that is, they obstinately went on in their evil doings; for to go forth means the same as to pass. They then *passed from evil to evil;* that is, when they had done one evil, no repentance entered their hearts, so as to turn back; but they continued their wickedness, and accumulated evils on evils. We now then understand what the Prophet means; for he sets forth their pertinacity in evil deeds, and at the same time shews that there was no evidence of amendment, for they passed from one bad deed to another like it.

And me have they not known, saith Jehovah. He shews here what is the source of all evils; they had cast aside every knowledge and every thought of God. We indeed know that when God is really known, his fear must necessarily influence our hearts; and the knowledge of God begets reverence and a regard for religion. It is indeed true, that God is somewhat known by even the ungodly and the wicked, and that they have some notions respecting him; but it is no more than an empty knowledge. When indeed we are fully persuaded that God is the judge of the world, and when we have also a knowledge of his goodness and paternal favour, we necessarily fear him and spontaneously and willingly worship and serve him. Ignorance of God, then, is a kind of madness which carries men headlong to every sort of impiety. On this account, God complains that he was not known by the people, for the fear of him was not in them. It follows—

4. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.

4. Et vir à socio suo cavete (*hoc est*, caveat; *ad verbum*, custodiat se; caveat *igitur* sibi quisque à socio,) et super omni fratre (*ad verbum*) ne confidatis (*hoc est*, nemo confidat proprio fratre;) quia omnis frater supplantando supplantat, et omnis socius fraudulenter incedit.

shot; by falsity and perfidiousness they have become great in the land," *Syriac;*—"Their tongues for falsehood have they bent as a bow; and prevailed has perfidy over the land," *Arabic.* *Blayney* makes a conjectural emendation, and *Houbigant* and *Horsley* make another; but neither is necessary. The literal version is as follows,—

And they bend their tongue, their lying bow;
And not for truth are they strong in the land.

"Their lying bow," or "their bow of falsehood;" it was a bow by which they shot lies; they employed their tongues for this purpose.—*Ed.*

In this verse the Prophet describes the extreme wickedness of the people. For though sometimes thefts, robberies, frauds, slaughters, perjuries, sorceries prevail, yet some regard for near relations remains; but it is monstrous when all relative affections are destroyed. As then, even in the most wicked, there remain some natural affections, called *storgæ* by philosophers, it follows, that men depart wholly from nature and become wild beasts, when these no longer exist. This is the import of what is here said.

There is a similar passage in Mic. vii. 5, 6. The idea is there indeed more fully expanded; for the Prophet adds, "From her who sleeps in thy bosom guard the doors of thy mouth; for the son lies in wait for his father, and the daughter delivers up her mother to death; and the chief enemies of man are his own domestics." The prophets then mainly agree in shewing, that there was no humanity left among them; for the son, forgetful of his duty, rose up against his father, and every one was perfidious towards his own friend, and a brother spared not his own brother.

Let a man then *guard himself.* This is not an admonition, as though the Prophet exhorted men to be wary; but he only shews that there was no fidelity; for every one was perfidious and unfaithful towards his own friend, and even a brother acted unjustly towards his own brother. It hence follows, that the Jews are charged with being natural monsters; for they were deservedly objects of detestation, when they cast aside every care for their own blood, and as far as they could, destroyed everything like humanity. He says that brothers by *supplanting supplanted,* that is, craftily deceived and circumvented their own brothers. The verb עקב, *okob,* is to be taken metaphorically; it is derived from the heel of the foot, and means to oppress the simple by secret arts. He says also, that all *friends acted fraudulently.* Of this kind of speaking we have spoken on ch. vi. 28; for we found there the same complaint; and the Prophet then said the Jews were like iron and brass, because they had hardened themselves so as to be capable of any cruelty. This sort of speaking often occurs, when the word רכיל, *rekil,* is connected with the verb הלך, *elak;* and they who are the

most learned in the language say, that this word is never found in Scripture but in connexion with the verb to go or to walk. They hence conclude that some particular person is meant, that is, one who goes about veiled or deceitfully, and rambles and runs here and there, that he may find some opportunity of deceiving and cheating. It cannot be taken here for slandering, as we have also stated on chapter the sixth: it is too unmeaning. It is found indeed in this sense in Lev. xix. 16, "Go not about a slanderer among thy people;" where some render it a whisperer. But the Prophet no doubt condemns here the frauds and deceitful crafts, by which they deceived and cheated one another: for רכל, *recal*, signifies a merchant; and as it is often the case that traders act cunningly and practise crafty artifices, the Hebrews call that man רכיל, *racal*, fraudulent and wickedly crafty, whose object is to deceive and cheat. And we see that this is the meaning in this place, as it designates those who circumvented one another: for the Prophet says, that they were foolish who trusted in brothers or friends; and he gives the reason, because brothers supplanted one another, and friends went about fraudulently.[1] It follows—

5. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* weary themselves to commit iniquity.

5. Et vir proximo suo (socio) mentitur (*hoc est*, quisque; *nam* איש *ponitur indefinite apud Hebræos pro nota universali;* quisque *ergo* proximum suum circumvenit, *nempe* mendacio; *nam* התל *significat mentiri*,) et veritatem non loquitur; docuerunt linguas suas loqui mendacium (*hoc est*, linguas suas formarunt ad mendacia,) malè agere fatigati sunt (*hoc est*, malè agendo fatigantur.)

Jeremiah goes on with the same subject. He says that fidelity had so disappeared among the Jews, that every one endeavoured to deceive his neighbour. Hence it followed, that they were without any shame. Some sense of shame at least remains among men, when they have to do with their own friends; for though they may be wholly given to gain, and to indulge in falsehoods, yet when they transact business with friends, they retain some regard for equity, and shame checks their wickedness: but when there is no difference

[1] See note on chap. vi. 28.—*Ed.*

made between friends and strangers, it follows that their character is become altogether brutal. This is what the Prophet meant.

And he adds, that they *spoke not the truth.* He now says that they were liars, not in this or that particular business; but that they were perfidious and deceitful in everything. This clause then is not to be limited to some special acts of fraud; but it is the same as though he had said, that they knew not what truth was, or what it was to act with good faith and to speak honestly to their neighbours; for they were wholly imbued with deceits, and no truth could come out of their mouth.

And for the same purpose he says, that they had *taught their tongues to speak falsehood.* The expression in this clause is stronger; for he means that they were wholly given to deceit, as by long use they had formed their tongues for this work. The tongue ought to be the representative of the mind, according to the old saying; for why was the tongue formed, but in order that men may communicate with one another? For the thoughts are hidden, and they come forth when we speak with each other. But the Prophet says that the order of nature was by them inverted, for they had *taught their tongues to lie.* We also hence learn that they had no fidelity whatever; for their very tongues had been taught to deceive: as when one by practice has learnt anything, it is what he does readily; so when the tongues are formed by continual use and inured to lying, they can do nothing else.

He says at last, that they *wearied themselves with evil deeds.* This is indeed an hyperbolical language; but yet the Prophet very fitly sets forth the deplorable state of the people,—that they practised the doing of evil even to weariness. As when any one is seized with some foolish lust, he spares no labour and does himself much harm, but feels not his wearied state as long as he is engaged, for his ardour dementates him: so he says now, that they were wearied in doing evil. When a hunter pursues the game, he undergoes much more labour than any common workman, or any husbandman. We see that even kings and courtiers, while hunting, are so

blinded, that they see no danger nor feel any weariness. So we find that men given to pleasure, when lust draws them here and there, feel no concern for the greatest weariness. According to this sense then the Prophet says, that they were wearied in doing evil, as though he had said, that they were so devoted to wickedness, that the pleasure of doing evil wholly blinded them and made them mad.[1]

We now perceive the Prophet's meaning: He confirms, as I have said, what he had stated before. He had threatened the people with utter ruin; they were secure and heedless, and despised all his denunciations. He now shews, from God's nature and office, that ruin was nigh them, though they feared it not and thought themselves abundantly safe. But if God be the judge of the world, as it will be hereafter proved, how is it possible for him to connive perpetually at so great wickedness? And to shew this he also adds—

6. Thine habitation *is* in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord.

6. Tu habitas in dolo (*hoc est*, inter homines dolosos; *nam subaudiendum est nomen, quemadmodum sæpe alibi vidimus genitivum casum poni pro epitheto, et subaudiri nomen substantivum; Tu igitur* habitas inter homines dolosos;) in dolo renuunt cognoscere me, dicit Jehova.

The Prophet here introduces God as the speaker, that the Jews might know that they had not to do with mortal man. For they might, according to their usual perverseness, have raised this objection, "Thou indeed severely condemnest us, and treatest us reproachfully; but who has made thee our

[1] The whole verse may be thus rendered,—

And they deceive, every one his neighbour,
And the truth they speak not;
They have taught their tongue the word of falsehood;
With perverting have they wearied themselves.

The verb for "deceive" means to mock, to trifle with, to play the fool with. Their object was to befool their neighbours by cheating and deceiving them. "The word," or the matter, "of falsehood," is falsehood itself, or sheer falsehood. The *Vulgate* and the *Syriac's* version is, "They have taught their tongue to speak falsehood." To teach the tongue falsehood, was to habituate it to tell lies. The last line is differently rendered. The *Septuagint* deviates far from the original. The version of the *Vulgate* is, "They have laboured to act unjustly;" and this comes near the meaning; only "to act unjustly" is rather to act pervertingly: they wrested and turned everything from its right course and meaning; and they laboured in perverting things, until they wearied themselves. Falsehood requires more labour than truth.—*Ed.*

judge?" Lest then they should think that the words which he had hitherto declared, were the words of man, he interposes the authority of God, *Thou*, he says, *dwellest in the midst of a deceitful people.*

But we must observe that this admonition to the Prophet was necessary for two reasons. For when God searches the minds and hearts of men by his word, ministers of the word are necessary to exercise this jurisdiction, men endued with wisdom, understanding, and prudence. The word, says the apostle, is like a two-edged sword, or it is one that cuts on both sides, for it penetrates into the hearts and thoughts of man and into their very marrow. (Heb. iv. 12.) We also know what Paul says, "When an unbeliever comes into your assembly, his conscience is searched; so that he will be constrained to fall down and to give glory to God." (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) To the same purpose is this saying of Christ, "When the Spirit is come, he will judge the world," (John xvi. 8;) for by the Spirit he means the preaching of the Gospel. It is then necessary that the ministers of the word, in order that they may faithfully and profitably perform their office, should be taught to understand the deceits and subterfuges by which men are wont to deceive. As then there are many hidden things in the hearts of men, he who would effectually teach must know that the inmost recesses of the heart must be probed and searched. The Prophet had heard from God that the people, over whom he was appointed, were fallacious and filled with guiles and frauds: *Thou*, he says, *dwellest in the midst of a deceitful people;* as though he had said, "Thou hast to do with dishonest men, who not only openly betray their wickedness, but also deceive when they pretend any repentance or profess obedience to God: that they may not therefore weaken or cajole thy resolution by their deceptions, settle it in thy mind that thou wilt have to contend with their wiles." This is one reason.

There is another reason; for as God's servants ought to know their wiles, which they are bidden to reprove, so there is need of courage and perseverance, lest hypocrisy should dishearten them: for such a thought as this may occur to the minds of God's servants, "What shall I do? for hidden

to me are the thoughts of men: now the truth ought to penetrate into the whole soul; but I know not what lies hid within in any one." Thus pious teachers might be weakened in their efforts and disheartened, or wholly discouraged, unless God supported them. It was then for this reason that Jeremiah was expressly told, that he had to do with a deceitful and false people.[1]

He afterwards adds, *Through guile they refuse to know me.* God had before complained, that he was not known by the people; but he now exaggerates their crime by saying, that they craftily evaded every light, as though he had said, that they could not plead ignorance or any levity; for through guile, says God, they refuse to know me. As they wholly flattered themselves with deceptions, they designedly extinguished, as far as they could, the light. By guile then he means that obstinate craftiness by which the people cast aside every instruction. It afterwards follows—

7. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them: for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?	7. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Ecce ego examinabo eos (*vel*, conflabo; *ad verbum*, examinans, *vel*, conflans,) et probabo eos; nam quomodo agerem cum filia (*ad verbum*, à facie filiæ) populi mei?

Jeremiah, speaking in God's name, concludes that the chastisement, of which he had spoken, was necessary. And

[1] *Houbigant*, *Horsley*, and *Venema* have suggested emendations as to this verse, derived in some measure from the *Septuagint*. A part of the first word, שִׁבְתֵּךְ, is connected by the *Septuagint* with the former verse; for it is divided into שִׁב and תֵּךְ. As to this division the preceding authors agree; but they differ as to the construction, though mainly the same in sense. The most probable is that of *Venema*, for he only divides the word, and gives this version,

Burst forth does robbery upon robbery, deceit on deceit;
They refuse to know me, saith Jehovah.

Burst forth, or boil—*excæstuat*, is certainly not the meaning of שִׁב, which signifies to return, to turn, to restore, &c. Then the rendering would be,

Return does guile for guile, deceit for deceit.

The first word is rendered "usury—τόκος" by the *Septuagint*, but תֵּךְ means guile or fraud. See Ps. x. 7; lv. 12; lxxii. 14. The meaning is, that their dishonest dealings were reciprocal: the cheats cheated one another.

Our version agrees with the *Vulgate* and the *Syriac*, and is adopted by *Blayney*: and he concludes from the end of this verse, that the speaker from the 2d verse is not the Prophet, but God; who, adopting the language of man, intimates his wish to leave a people so wicked. But this conclusion is not necessary; for the prophets often introduce sentences of this kind.—*Ed.*

what I have already said appears more clearly from this verse,—that he brings to light their sins, that they might know that they could not escape God's hand, who is a just avenger of wickedness; for they had extremely provoked him by their petulance and obstinacy.

I will try or melt *them*, he says, *and I will prove them.* As they put on a false colour, he says that there was a trial needful, as when any one shews copper or any other metal for gold, he is disproved by trial. Any impostor might otherwise sell dross for silver: the spurious metal, that is passed as gold or silver, must be proved; it must be cast into the fire and melted. As then the Jews thought that they had honest pretences to cover their baseness, God gives this answer, that he had yet a way to discover their deceitfulness, and as it were tells them, "The goldsmith, when any one brings dross for silver, or copper for gold, has a furnace, and he tries it; so will I *try* and melt you; for you think that you can dazzle my eyes by false pretences: this will avail you nothing." In short, God intimates that he had means ready at hand to discover their deceitfulness, and that thus their hypocrisy would be of no advantage to them, as his judgments would be like a furnace. As then stubble or wood, cast into the furnace, is immediately burnt, so hypocrites cannot endure God's judgment. They indeed at first exhibit some brightness, until God tries them; but their deceits must eventually be discovered; and they themselves will be consumed when they come to be really proved. This is the meaning.

And the reason is added, *For how should I do with the daughter of my people?* This may be applied to Jeremiah himself; but it would be a strained meaning. He then continues, I have no doubt, to speak in God's name; *How* then *should I do*, or act, *with the daughter of my people?* God speaks here as one deliberating; and thus he more fully proves the Jews guilty; for since he admits them as judges or counsellors, they could give no other reply. We hence see that this question is very emphatic; for the Prophet intimates, that except the Jews were beyond measure stupid, they could no longer flatter themselves in their sins, so as to

demand to be otherwise treated by God, as they had in so many ways and with such perversity procured vengeance for themselves.[1]

But we hence learn that it is right that judgment should begin at the house of God, as it is elsewhere said. (1 Pet. iv. 17.) God indeed will not pass by anything without punishing it: hence the heathens must at last stand before his tribunal. But as he is nearer to his Church, their impiety, who profess themselves to be as it were his domestics, is less tolerable, as though he had said, "I have chosen you to be my peculiar people, and have taken you under my care and protection; when ye become intractable, what remains for me to do, but to try you, as ye act so unfaithfully towards me." It follows—

8. Their tongue *is as* an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: *one* speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

8. Sagitta tracta (*ut quidam vertunt; alii,* occidens) lingua eorum; mendacium loquitur; os ejus pacem ad proximum loquetur, et in medio sui (*hoc est,* intra viscera sua, intus) ponet insidias.

The Prophet again complains of the deceitfulness of their tongues; and he compares them to deadly, or drawn out arrows. Gold is said to be drawn out, when refined by repeated meltings; so also arrows, when sharpened, are more piercing. The Prophet then says, that their tongues were like deadly or sharpened arrows: how so? because they ever spoke guile, by either slandering or circumventing others. But the expression is general; and the Prophet no doubt meant to include all modes of deceiving.

For it afterwards follows, *With the mouth they speak peace;* that is, every one professed friendship, and his words were

[1] All the ancient versions (except the *Vulgate*) and the *Targum* read, as though בת, "daughter," were רעת, "wickedness," as in chap. vii. 12. Both *Houbigant* and *Horsley* adopt this reading; and the first gives the meaning of "thus" to איך, and not "how." Then the verse would be,

Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
Behold I will melt them that I may try them;
For thus will I do because of the wickedness of my people.

The rendering of the last line, according to the received text, might be this, which is nearly the *Vulgate*,—

For how should I deal *otherwise* with the daughter of my people?

The passage runs better in this way, than according to the proposed emendation.—*Ed.*

honey; and yet *within he did set up*, or concealed *intrigues*. Here in other words he sets forth their perfidy; for the tongue and the heart differed. They shewed by the tongue what was different from the sentiment of the heart. Hence he says, that they *set up treacheries in the midst of them*, or in their hearts, while they *spoke peace* with the mouth, that is, pretended brotherly kindness.[1] At last he repeats again what he had said before, (chap. v. 9)—

9. Shall I not visit them for these *things?* saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

9. An super hoc non visitabo eos, dicit Jehova? an in gente quæ talis est (quæ est sicut hæc) non se ulciscetur anima mea?

We have already met with this verse; it will therefore be enough briefly to refer to what it contains. God shews here, that except he denied himself he must necessarily punish the Jews. How so? He takes it as granted that he is the judge of the world: he had said that the Jews were not only become wicked in one thing, but were so given up to all kinds of wickedness, that they wearied themselves; what then was to be done? God would not have acted in a manner worthy of himself, nor preserved consistency, had he not punished such men; for he must have changed his nature, had he not hated such a perverse nation. But he speaks after the manner of men when he mentions vengeance; for we know that no passions belong to God, as it has been often stated: but as he hates wickedness, so he is said to

[1] The word, שחט, means "killing" or slaying; see Gen. xxii. 10; xxxvii. 31; Ex. xii. 6. Its primary meaning, as Parkhurst thinks, is to shed, or to *drain off*, either blood from animals, or juice from grapes, or gold from dross. But it is used in the sense of slaying. The *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate* render it here, wounding,"—

A killing arrow *is* their tongue;
Deceit it speaks;
With his mouth does *one* speak peace to his neighbour,
But in his heart he sets an ambush for him.

Literally, "his ambush," that is, the ambush of which he is the object. This form of speech is often in Hebrew. See Job xxviii. 10. "Ponit ei insidias" is the *Vulgate*. *Blayney* gives a paraphrase, not a version,—

But inwardly will he resolve to fall upon him by surprise.

The future tense here, as in many other instances, is used as a present tense, and designed to shew the habitual practice of the people. The same is done in the Welsh language: the future tense is continually used to express a present action.—*Ed.*

execute vengeance, when he appears as a judge and chastises those by whom he has been provoked to wrath.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not by our sins to provoke thee more and more, we may at least be warned by thy threatenings and the words of thy prophets, and may not continue obstinate in evil nor pertinaciously resist thy will, but that we may on the contrary learn to anticipate thy judgment and thus receive thy corrections, so that our sins may be hated by us, and that we may become judges of ourselves, in order that we may obtain pardon, and that having obtained it we may not doubt ever to call on thee as our Father, until thou at length gatherest us unto that blessed inheritance, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only Son.—Amen.

Lecture Thirty-Sixth.

10. For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through *them;* neither can *men* hear the voice of the cattle: both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone.

10. Super montes tollam (*vel,* assumam) fletum et lamentationem, et super pascua (*vel,* loca amœna; *alii vertunt,* tuguria) deserti planctum; quia vastata sunt (*alii vertunt,* incensa;) ita non sit vir transiens, et non audiunt vocem pecudum; ab ave cœlorum (*hoc est,* ab avibus) usque ad bestiam migrarunt, abierunt.

THE Prophet had exhorted others to lament and to bewail. He now comes forth as though none had ears to attend to his admonition. As then he himself undertakes to mourn and to lament, he no doubt indirectly condemns the insensibility of the whole people. He saw by the spirit of prophecy, that all the rest thought what he said incredible and therefore fabulous. For though the kingdom of Judah was at that time much wasted, and the kingdom of Israel wholly fallen, they yet continued secure and heedless when they ought to have expected God's vengeance every day, and even every hour. Since then there was such insensibility in the people, the Prophet here prepares himself for lamentation and mourning.

I will take up, he says, *mourning and lamentation for the mountains.* The words may be explained, "I will take up

mourning, which shall ascend as far as the mountains;" but the cause of mourning seems rather to be intended; for it immediately follows, *and weeping for the pastures of the desert.* Had not this clause been added, the former meaning might be taken, that is, that mourning would be so loud as to penetrate into the mountains or ascend into the highest parts. But as Jeremiah connects the two clauses, *for the mountains,* and *for the pastures of the desert,* the other meaning is much more appropriate,—that the confidence of the people was very absurd, as they thought themselves beyond danger, dwelling as they did on the plains; for the enemies, he says, shall leave nothing untouched; they shall come to the mountains and to the pastures of the desert. It hence follows, that they were foolish who promised themselves quietness on the plains, where the enemy could easily come.

We now then understand the Prophet's meaning: he sets here his own fear and solicitude in contrast with the stupor of the whole people. *I will raise,* he says, *weeping and lamentation for the mountains:* but others remained secure and thoughtless in their pleasures. He then shews, that while they were blind, his eyes were open, and he saw the coming ruin which was now at hand. And he sets the mountains and pastures of the desert in opposition to the level country. For when a country is laid waste, we know that still a retreat is sought on mountains; for enemies dread ambushes there, and access is not easy where the roads are narrow. Then the Prophet says, that even the mountains would not be beyond the reach of danger, for the enemies would march there: he says the same of the pastures of the desert. We hence learn how absurd was their confidence who thought themselves safe because they inhabited the plain country, which was the most accessible.

As to the word נאות, *naut,* it comes from נוה, *nue,* which means to dwell.[1] He then takes נאות, *naut,* as signifying pleasant places, or pastures. Some render it sheds or cot-

[1] It is not from this root, but from אוה, to desire, in Niphal, נאוה, to be desirable. The noun means *desirable* or pleasant *places* or spots. See Ps. xxiii. 2; Jer. xxv. 37; Joel i. 19.—*Ed*

tages. David uses the same word in Ps. xxiii. 2, in speaking of God's favour to him, who was pleased to become his shepherd: "He makes me to lie down," he says, "in pleasant places." But the Prophet no doubt means pastures here. And he calls them the *pastures of the desert.* The word מִדְבָּר, *midbar*, we know, is taken to designate not only waste and sterile places, but also a mountainous country. Though then the richest pastures were on mountains, yet the Jews were wont to call them deserts: there is therefore nothing absurd in saying, the pleasant places or pastures of the desert. But we must bear in mind the contrast, of which I have reminded you: for he intended to condemn the foolish confidence of the people, who thought that they were dwelling in safety, when yet they were exposed to enemies, and had no means to repel or retard their progress.

Because they are laid waste, he says. This word may be taken in another sense, "burnt up;" but it is not suitable here. He says then that these places are *laid waste, so that no one passed through.* He means that mountains would not only be without inhabitants, but would be so deserted and solitary that there would be none passing over them. There would then be none to frequent them. It hence follows, that there would be no inhabitants. He then adds, that *no voice of cattle* was *heard;* as though he had said, that their enemies would take away as their spoil whatever should be found there: for the wealth of mountains consists in cattle; for there is neither sowing nor reaping there; but inhabitants of mountains get their living and whatever is necessary to support life, from flesh and skin and milk and cheese. When therefore the Prophet declares that there would be no voice of cattle, it is the same as though he had said, that the mountains would become altogether uninhabited, for their enemies would take away all the cattle found there.

He then adds, *From the bird of the heavens to the earthly beast they shall migrate and depart.*[1] Here he seems again

[1] The whole verse is as follows,—

10. For the mountains will I raise weeping and wailing,
And for the pleasant places of the desert, a lamentation;
For they are desolate, without any one passing through,
And they hear not the voice of cattle;

indirectly to reprove the insensibility of the people, as though he had said, that the birds would feel it to be the judgment of God, while yet men were wholly insensible; and that there would be a similar feeling in brute animals; as though he had said, that there would be more understanding in birds and animals than in the Jews, who had not only been created in the image of God, but had also been enlightened as to the truth of salvation; for shine among them did the truth of God in the law. Hence the Prophet shews that this stupidity was most shameful; for they were as stupid as if they had no thought and no understanding, while yet birds acknowledged the vengeance of God, and brute animals were terrified by it. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. It follows—

11. And I will make Jerusalem heaps, *and* a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

11. Et ponam Jerusalem in acervos, in locum draconum; et urbes Jehudah ponam vastitatem, ut non sit habitator.

The Prophet comes now to Jerusalem and the neighbouring cities. He said before, that ruin would reach the mountains and the farthest recesses; but he says now, *I will turn Jerusalem into heaps.* This seemed incredible, for it was a well fortified city, and also full of inhabitants to defend it: we know besides that the Jews were in confederacy with the kingdom of Egypt. This denunciation then was extremely unwelcome to the Jews. But though they thought themselves hitherto safe, yet the Prophet set before their eyes their final destruction. They indeed regarded it as a fable; but they found too late, that the despisers of God gain no advantage in hardening themselves against his threatenings. We shall meet with this verse again; I shall therefore now pass over it lightly.

He says, that it would be hereafter a *place for dragons;*

> From the bird of heaven even to the beast,
> They have migrated, they have gone away.

The "pleasant places" were "desolate;" and "in the mountains" no "voice of cattle" was heard. No one "passing through" explains the desolation. The word is improperly rendered, "burnt up," in our version and by *Blayney.* It was used before in the sense of desolation, ch. iv. 7; and it ought to be so rendered in ch. ii. 15. In the last line, the migration refers to birds, and the going away to the beasts. In none of the ancient versions is this distinction intimated.—*Ed.*

as though he had said, that it would be no longer inhabited. He declares the same respecting the cities of Judah,—that they would all be a *waste*. We hence see how courageous and persevering a mind was Jeremiah endued with, that he dared to preach thus in the midst of the city, and to set himself in opposition to the king and his counsellors, and to the whole people, who wished to be soothed with flatteries, and who had been thus treated by the false prophets. As then Jeremiah was thus bold, as a celestial herald, to denounce on them this dreadful calamity, we hence learn that he was endued with the power of God, and that he did not speak as one commissioned by men; for had he not been sustained by God's power, he must have been a hundred times disheartened, nor would he have dared to speak a word. This invincible courage seals his doctrine; for we hence with certainty learn, that it proceeded from God, because the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit was evident. He afterwards adds—

12. Who *is* the wise man, that may understand this? and *who is he* to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth *and* is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?

12. Quis vir prudens ut intelligat hoc? (*ad verbum*, et intelligens,) et ad quem loquutum est os Jehovæ, ut annunciet quare perierit terra, vastata sit instar deserti, ut nemo transeat? (מבלי עבר, absque transeunte, *ad verbum*.)

Here the Prophet reproves more sharply the insensibility of the people, because none attended to the judgments of God; for though they were apparent, no one considered them. The question arose from astonishment; for it was like something dreadfully monstrous, that so few among the people knew that God would be the punisher of crimes so apparent to all. Had they a particle of understanding, they must have known that a dreadful calamity was nigh at hand, since they continued in so many ways to provoke God. And now that the labour of the Prophet, after having said what ought to have roused them all, had been all in vain; was not this doubly monstrous? For he had spent a long time, and had never ceased to cry; and yet all were deaf, nay, his teaching was treated with contempt.

Hence is his astonishment, when he says, *Who is a wise*

man? he intimates that there was hardly one in a hundred whom the fear of God influenced. It must then be remembered, that the Prophet complains of the few number of those who perceived, that it could not be but that God would shortly put forth his hand to punish the wickedness which then everywhere prevailed. But yet he exhorts all the faithful children of God to disregard the multitude, and to gather courage, and to make more account of God's word than of the contumacy of them all. There are then two things in this sentence; for the question means, that few could be found among the people who were wise, and who applied their minds and thoughts to consider the miserable state of the people; but, on the other hand, he intimates that it is true wisdom in God's faithful servants, not to despond, and not to follow the multitude. He then intimates that they are alone truly wise who consider God's judgments before he openly executes them. There is a similar sentence in Ps. cvii. 43; for the Prophet, after having spoken of God's judgments, which are visible through the whole world, exclaims, "Who is a wise man, that he may understand these things?" as though he had said, that though the works of God, which evidence both his goodness and his judgment, might indeed be observed in every part of the world, yet that all were blind. The Prophet then by this exclamation reprobates the insensibility of men, who overlook God's judgments, though they are apparent before their eyes. So also the same thing is meant in this place, *Who is a wise man?* But we must further notice the second thing, to which I have referred, namely, that all the faithful are here encouraged, as the Prophet teaches us, that this is the rule of wisdom,—to open our eyes to see God's judgments, which are hid from the world: while others are drawn away by their lusts or sunk in their stupor, the Prophet teaches us, that we are wise, when we duly consider, as I have already said, what the Lord has made known to us in his word. Hence it follows, that all the wise men of this world are foolish, who so harden themselves, that they do not perceive in God's word what is yet open to their eyes. *Who* then *is a wise man, and he will understand these things?*

He afterwards adds, *To whom has the mouth of Jehovah spoken to declare this?* He complains here that there were no prophets. He said, at the beginning of the verse, that there were none wise, because all heedlessly despised the threatenings and judgments of God: now in the second place he adds, there were none to arouse the careless people who were asleep in their sins. But by this sentence he claims authority for himself; for though he was without associates and assistants, he yet intimates that his teaching was not on that account of less value: "Be it," he says, (for he speaks by way of concession,) "be it, that there is no prophet to recall the people from their sins, to exhort them to repent, to terrify the ungodly: however this may be, yet the Lord has appointed me to teach and to exhort the people." We hence see that the Prophet claims for himself full and complete authority, though he alone denounced God's vengeance. Many indeed then boasted that they were prophets; but they were only false flatterers. When the Prophet saw that many abused the name, and did not perform the office faithfully and sincerely, he set himself in opposition to them all; as though he had said, "It is enough that the Lord has commanded me to do this; I therefore denounce on you this calamity, which ye heedlessly disregard, because false teachers deceive you by their mischievous adulations."

Who will declare, he says, *why the land is to perish,* and to be *laid waste like the desert, so that there should be no inhabitant?* We may apply this to two periods. For when Jeremiah spoke, the kingdom was yet standing, and, as I have said, the Jews were not so subdued as to humble themselves before God: they were therefore still indulging themselves in their sins. Now whence did this indulgence proceed, except from their prosperous condition? Yet the Prophet says that the land had perished, and justly so; but he says this, because he did not judge of the people's state according to what it appeared then to be, but according to the judgment which he saw by the prophetic spirit was impending over them. And we may extend this farther; as though Jeremiah had said, "When God shall have so chas-

tised this people, that there may be as it were a visible monument of celestial wrath; there shall yet be then no prophets to remind them whence these evils have proceeded." This indeed we know was the case, when the city was partly burnt and partly demolished, and the temple pulled down: the contumacy of the people was so great, that their hearts were stone, and their minds iron. There was then a monstrous hardness in that calamity. They indeed cried for their evils; but no one perceived that God was executing what he had denounced for so many years. For Jeremiah, as we have said, exercised his office of teaching for a long time: but before he began, Isaiah had already been worn out; and before Isaiah, Micah had prophesied. Though, however, threatenings had been renewed daily for a hundred years, and terrors had been announced, yet there was no one who attended.[1]

This passage, then, may be thus explained,—That when threatenings should appear by the effect not to have been announced in vain, yet the people would even then be insensible, for no one would attend to nor consider God's judgment: they would all indeed feel their evils, but no one would regard the hand of him who smote them, as it is said in another place. (Is. ix. 13.) Either meaning may be allowed; but, as I think, the Prophet here deplores the hardness and contumacy of the people at that time; as though he had said, that there were none who considered God's

[1] Somewhat a different view may be taken of this verse, as it will appear from the following version,—

Who is the man that is wise,
And he will understand this,—
And to whom the mouth of Jehovah has spoken,
And he will declare it,—
Even why destroyed is the land,
Made waste like the desert, without a traveller.

The wise man is the same with him to whom God had spoken: and what he had to understand and to declare was the reason why the land was destroyed. Then in the next verse God himself, by the mouth of his prophet, makes this known. "Made waste" is rendered "burnt up" by the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate*, but "desolated," or desolate, by the *Targum*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic*; and no doubt rightly, as "without a traveller," or one passing through, explains what is meant: in like manner, "without an inhabitant," in the preceding verse, is an explanation of "the cities of Judah" being made "desolate," or rather, entirely desolate.—*Ed.*

judgments, and that there was no prophet to rouse those who were torpid. But yet, as it has been stated, he thus intimates, that he had sufficient authority, though he had no associate or assistant; for he had been chosen by God, and had been sent to carry this message. It follows—

13. And the Lord saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;

14. But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

15. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, *even* this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

13. Et dixit Jehova, Quia dereliquerunt legem meam, quam posui coram ipsis (ad faciem ipsorum, *ad verbum,*) et non audierunt vocem meam, et non ambulaverunt in ea (*hoc est,* secundum ipsam;)

14. Et ambulaverunt post cogitationes (*vel,* post contumaciam; *nam utroque modo vertunt hoc nomen,* post cogitationes *ergo*) cordis sui, et post Baalim, quos docuerunt patres ipsorum:

15. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce ego cibans (cibabo) populum hunc amaritudine, et potabo aquis veneni (*vel,* venenatis; *alii vertunt,* aquis fellis; *nam* ראש *utrumque significat.*)

Jeremiah now confirms what I have stated, and more fully explains it,—that though no teacher or a disciple was found in the land, yet there was sufficient power in God's word alone, and that his judgment depended not on the will or the perceptions of men. After having then complained that all were foolish, and that there were no prophets to reprove their security and indifference, he adds, *Thus saith Jehovah.* Here he sets God in opposition to all men, to the king and his courtiers, as well as to the common people. Who then is a wise man? as though he looked around him; and there was no man who considered. He was then in suspense; and afterwards he said, "There is no prophet to rouse them from their usual stupor." He remained still in suspense; and then he turned to God and said, "But Jehovah has spoken;" that is, "Be it, that they are like brute beasts, though they arrogate to themselves great wisdom; nevertheless God speaks, and we ought to be satisfied. We ought then to be silent, and to make no stir; though no one approves, though no one attends to God speaking, there is yet sufficient authority and power in his voice alone." We now then more fully understand the Prophet's design: He had said that all men were stupid, and that there was no pro-

phet; and now, on the other hand, he shews that God was not silent nor asleep.

Thus saith Jehovah, Because this people *have forsaken my law*, &c. He shews that the cause of all evils was a departure from God's law. No one was willing to confess this, and all the prophets were silent; yet Jeremiah says here, that the cause was to be asked of God why he so grievously afflicted the people. But he takes as granted what was most true, that God was not without reason displeased with the chosen people. It hence then follows, that they were apostates, and had forsaken the law: God would not have otherwise so severely punished them. Though then no one perceived the cause of their evils, though no one shewed it, yet God himself ought to have been attended to, who said, that they had *forsaken the law.*

He then adds, *Which I have set before their face.* Here he takes away every pretence for ignorance; for they might have objected and said, that the doctrine of the law was obscure, and that they were deceived through want of knowledge. The Prophet anticipates this objection by saying, that the law was set before them; that is, that they were abundantly taught what was right, what pleased God; so that they now in vain and even falsely pleaded ignorance; for they went astray wilfully by closing their eyes against clear light. For this is what he means by saying that the law was set before their face: and it is what Moses often repeats, "Behold, I have set before thee," (Deut. xi. 32, and elsewhere:) and this he said, that the people might not seek for themselves vain excuses for ignorance, as they were wont to do.

But while we are not to overlook this circumstance, we may yet hence learn this general truth,—that the law of God is not so obscure but that we may learn from it what is right. When, therefore, Moses is quoted, and the prophets are added as interpreters, there is no ground for us to evade, or to make the excuse, that the truth is too hidden or profound; for the law is set before our face, that the will of God may be made known to us. Whosoever then can read and hear what God has revealed once to the world by Moses

and the prophets is inexcusable; for we are taught here, and in other places, that it is a mere perverseness in all who hear the law, when they do not obey: *I have set the law,* he says, *before their face.*

And he adds, *And they have not hearkened to my voice, and have not walked in it.* He defines what it is not to hearken to his voice: for even hypocrites pretend to hear, and nod with their ears like asses; but as they obey not God when he speaks, it is evident that they are deaf. Hence he says that they *walked not* in his voice,[1] that is, that they obeyed not his voice. He hence concludes that they were deaf; for their life ought to have testified that they had heard the voice of God speaking to them.

He then adds, *And they have walked after the hardness,* or obstinacy, or imaginations, *of their own heart.*[2] He opposes the imaginations, or hardness of the heart, to the voice of God, as we find in other places, where contrary things are stated, that is, what men's minds devise, and what God shews by his word to be right; for there is no less contrariety between the rule of right living and the imaginations of men, than there is between fire and water. Let us therefore know, that our life cannot be rightly formed except we renounce our own imaginations, and simply obey the voice of God: for as soon as we yield the least to our own imaginations, we necessarily turn aside from the right way, which God has made known to us in his word. This contrast, then, between the law of God and the imaginations or the obduracy of men ought to be carefully noticed.

He then more clearly explains how they had sinned, *and after Baalim.*[3] The Prophet here adds nothing new; but

[1] "Voice" is for God's word; and so the *Targum* renders it: they did not *walk in,* or according to, his word.—*Ed.*

[2] See Note on chap. iii. 17, 18.

[3] It is supposed that the Israelites made a difference between this word and God: they allowed but one God, but introduced Baalim, or inferior gods, and worshipped them. They tried to evade the charge of idolatry, by alleging that Baalim were mediators. But no excuse of this kind was admitted, as God everywhere imputed idolatry to them. Notwithstanding this *example,* and the distinct declaration of Scripture, that there is but one God and *one* Mediator, (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5,) the error, the awful error of praying to saints, &c., as mediators, has prevailed in the Christian Church!—*Ed.*

by specifying one thing he shews how the Jews followed their own imaginations, by giving themselves up to profane superstitions. What indeed must happen to men, when they forsake God, and allow themselves to follow their own thoughts? what but error and superstition, yea, the abyss of all errors? In short, the Prophet in this clause intended to cut off every occasion for subterfuges; for the Jews, like hypocrites, who sophistically deal with God, might have made this evasion, and said, "Why dost thou object to us our imaginations? what are these imaginations?" *Baalim*, he says, "Ye have devised idols for yourselves in addition to the only true God; it is hence quite evident, that having forsaken God's word, ye have followed your own imaginations." He adds to Baalim, *as their fathers have taught them:* the relative אֲשֶׁר, *asher*, is to be taken for כְּ, *caph*, as.[1] I shall speak of this clause to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only testified what is right by the Law and the Prophets, in order that we may form our life in obedience to thy will, but hast also made more fully known to us by thy Gospel what is perfect righteousness,—O grant, that being ruled by thy Spirit, we may surrender ourselves altogether to thee, and so acquiesce in thy Word alone, that we may not deviate either to the right hand or to the left, but allow thee alone to be wise, and that acknowledging our folly and vanity, we may suffer ourselves to be taught by thy Word, so that we may really prove that we are truly obedient to thee, until having at length completed the course of this life, we shall reach that heavenly rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture Thirty-Seventh.

We explained yesterday what the Prophet said respecting the Jews, that though no one considered the reason why

[1] It makes no difference as to the meaning, but the true construction of this clause is as follows,—

Which their fathers have taught them.

The verb "to teach," in Hebrew as well as in some other languages, admits of two objective cases.—*Ed.*

God so severely afflicted them, yet they could not escape in this way, and that they in vain set up the shield of ignorance, for God had often declared that he abominated their superstitions. Though then they were all blind, and no prophet shewed to them the cause of their evils, yet Jeremiah said, that this alone was sufficient—that God had spoken, and would again speak to them. He said that they were not submissive to God's authority, but walked after the hardness of their own heart, and after Baalim. He added, that they had been *thus taught by their fathers.* By this clause he exaggerated their sin; for they did not then begin for the first time to sin, but became obstinate in their vices.

We may learn from this passage how foolishly the Papists now glory in imitating the fathers: for they think that examples stand for laws; nay, they hesitate not to oppose God's authority by what has been done by men. But we see that such an excuse is not only frivolous, but that thereby the crime is doubled; for more excusable is the ignorance of one year, or of a short time, than when there is a long obstinate persistency in it, and when children, after having embraced abominations, received from their fathers, hand them down to their posterity.

He at length concludes that God would take vengeance, but speaks in a figurative language, *I will feed them with bitterness.* The word לַעֲנָה, *lone,* is rendered "wormwood;" but as this is a wholesome herb, I prefer to render it "bitterness."[1] It is never found in a good sense, and therefore unsuitable to the nature of wormwood, which is often mentioned by Moses and the other prophets. (Deut. xix. 18; xxxii. 32; Heb. ii. 15.) Hence I am inclined to adopt a general term, "bitterness." He then adds, *I will give them poisonous waters to drink;*[2] as though God had said that he would execute a dreadful vengeance, so that it would appear in the meat and drink given them, which yet were remarkable testimonies of his paternal kindness towards them: for

[1] But the reason why this herb is mentioned is its bitterness, and not its wholesome effects. It was hence chosen to designate what is afflictive and distressing. This appears from Prov. v. 4, "bitter as wormwood." —*Ed.*

[2] See note on chap. viii. 14.

we cannot eat a crumb of bread nor drink a drop of water, except God's goodness, and the care which he takes for our safety, shines upon us. Hence is that awful imprecation in Ps. lxix. 22, 23, "Turned let their table be into an offence," &c. David also complained, when describing the barbarous cruelty of his enemies, that they gave him gall to drink: and we shall hereafter see what Jeremiah says; for in speaking of his enemies, he says that they had conspired to put him to death, and said, "Let us set wood for his bread." (Chap. xi. 19.) By these words then Jeremiah intended to express the dreadful vengeance of God; for he would not only deprive the Jews of his benefits, but also turn their bread into poison, and their water into bitterness.

We now then perceive the Prophet's meaning; and at the same time we must observe the expression, *the God of Israel.* The foolish boasting, that they were the descendants of Abraham, and that they were a holy people, chosen by God, always deluded the Jews. In order then to check their glorying, the Prophet says, that the God who spoke to them was the God whose name they falsely professed, and that he was the God who had chosen the children of Abraham as his peculiar people. It follows—

16. I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

16. Et dispergam eos inter gentes, quas non noverunt ipsi, neque patres eorum, et mittam post eos gladium, donec consumpsero ipsos.

As he had said that the Jews were following what they had received from their fathers, so he says now that God would *scatter them among nations,* which had been unknown to them and to their fathers. He then alludes to their mischievous tradition; for the fathers had imbued their children with ungodly errors, and had withdrawn them from God, that their doctrine might become altogether familiar to them. There is then a contrast to be noticed between the knowledge with which the fathers had inebriated their children, and their ignorance of the language of the nations.

And then as he had said, that they were walking after the hardness of their own heart and after Baalim, he says, *I will send a sword after them.* We hence see that the Prophet in

both clauses alludes to the defection of which he had spoken. And he adds, *Until I shall have consumed them;* and this is added, that they might not promise themselves a temporary or a moderate chastisement. Jeremiah then declares, that as they had abused God's forbearance, destruction was nigh them, and that God would continue to consume them, until he had wholly destroyed them. It follows—

17. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning *women*, that they may come:

18. And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.

17. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Attendite et vocate lamentatrices, ut veniant, et ad peritas mittite ut veniant:

18. Et festinent et tollant super nos luctum, et descendant oculi nostri in lachrymas, (*alii vertunt*, descendant cum lachrymis, *vel*, emittant lachrymas,) et palpebræ nostræ defluant in aquas.

In this passage, as in many others, the Prophet endeavours by a striking representation really to touch the hearts of his people, for he saw that they were extremely refractory, insensible, and secure. Since then the threatenings of God were either wholly despised, or had not sufficiently moved the hearts of the people, it was necessary to set forth God's judgments as present. Therefore the Prophet gives a striking description of what takes place in times of mourning. At the same time he seems to condemn indirectly the Jews for not knowing, through God's word, that there was a calamity at hand: for God's word ought indeed to be like a mirror, by which men ought to see God's goodness in his promises and also his judgment in his threatenings. As then all prophecies were deemed as fables by the people, it was not without some degree of derision that he addressed them in this manner,—

Hearken ye, and call for mourners, that they may come. An absurd and a foolish custom has prevailed almost in all ages to hire women as mourners, whom they called *præficæ;* they were employed to mourn for others. Heirs no doubt hired these foolish women, in order to shew their feigned piety; they spoke in praise of the dead, and shewed how great a loss was their death. The Prophet does not commend this custom; and we ought to know that Scripture

often takes similes from the vices of men, as from filth and dirt. If then any one concludes from these words of Jeremiah, that lamentations at funerals are not to be condemned, this would be foolish and puerile. The Prophet, on the contrary, does here reprove the Jews, because they heedlessly disregarded all God's threatenings, and were at the same time soft and tender at those foolish exhibitions, and all mourned at the sight of those women who were hired to lament; as the case is at this time, when a faithful teacher reprobates the prevailing folly of the Papists. For when the unprincipled men, who occupy the pulpits under the Papacy, speak with weeping, though they produce not a syllable from God's word, but add some spectacle or phantom, by producing the image of the Cross or some like thing, they touch the feelings of the vulgar and cause weeping, according to what actors do on the stage. As then the Papists are seized as it were with an insane feeling, when their deceivers thus gesticulate, so a faithful teacher may say to them, "Let any one come and set before your eyes the image of a dead man, or say, that you must all shortly die and be like the carcase shewn to you, and ye will cry and weep; and yet ye will not consider how dreadful God's judgment is, which I declare to you: I shew to you faithfully from the law, from the prophets, and from the Gospel, how dreadful is God's vengeance, and set before you what ye deserve; yet none of you are moved; but my doctrine is a mockery to you, and also my reproofs and threatenings: go then to your prophets, who shew you pictures and the like trumperies." So the Prophet says now, "I see that I can do you no good; the Lord will therefore give you no teachers but women." Of what sort? Even such, he says, as lament, or are hired to mourn.

We now then perceive why the Prophet speaks of hired women. *Attend ye*, he says; and why? They ought indeed to have been attentive to or to understand (for בִּן, *ben*, means properly to understand, and in Hithpael it signifies to consider) his words; but as he saw that he was ridiculed or despised, and that all the threatenings which proceeded from God were esteemed as fables, he now says, "*Consider ye and call for your lamenters*:—as I see such perverseness

in you, be taught at least by those women who are commonly invited to lament, and who sell their tears!" *Send*, he says, *for the skilful, that they may come.* By these words he intended more clearly to express, that the calamity which the people feared not was not far distant.

Let them, he says, *take up for us a wailing, and let our eyes come down to tears, and let our eyelids flow down into waters.* These are hyperbolical words, and yet they do not exceed the intenseness of the coming vengeance: for it was not in vain that he said at the beginning of the chapter, "Who will make my head waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears?" As then the greatness of the calamity could be expressed by no words, the Prophet was constrained to adopt these hyperbolical expressions: *Let them* then *take up for us a wailing, that our eyes may come down to tears:* and this he said, because he saw that he was heard with dry eyes, and that the people disregarded what had been denounced, when yet all ought to have been smitten with fear, from the least to the greatest. As then the Prophet saw that their contempt was so brutal, he says, that when lamenters came, there would then be the time for wailing, not indeed the seasonable time; but it is the same as though he had said, that the Jews would then find out how insensible they had been, in not having in due time considered the judgment of God.[1] It follows—

19. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast *us* out.

19. Quia vox luctus audita est ex Sion, Quomodo perditi (*aut*, vastati) sumus? pudefacti valdè? quia dereliquimus terram, quia projecerunt habitacula nostra (*quidam subaudirent*, projecerunt nos.)

We have said before, that when Jeremiah addressed the people in these words, they were still in a tolerably good condition, so that the king had confidence in his own resources; and his counsellors also thought that some aid

[1] I render the verses thus,—

17. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, bethink yourselves;
And call for mourning women, that they may come;
Yea, for the skilful send, that they may come,
18. And hasten, and raise for us a wailing,
That our eyes may pour forth tears,
And our eyelids drop down waters.—*Ed.*

would come to them from Egypt, and the people were likewise deceived. But the Prophet speaks of future events, and points out as by the finger the evils which were as yet concealed from the view; for he could not otherwise teach with any authority, as he had to do with men of iron hearts. As then he saw that his teaching had no effect, and was wholly disregarded by men so slothful, he felt it necessary to form his style so as to touch their feelings.

On this account he says, that a *voice was heard, a voice of wailing from Sion;* where yet all exulted with joy. Then he adds, *How have we been destroyed! and made greatly ashamed!* The Jews thought this a fable, until they found by experience that they had been extremely hard and obstinate: but this really happened. Though they were then indulging in their pleasures, he yet proclaims lamentations to them, as though they were already destroyed: *A voice,* he says, *has been heard,* as though the Jews were bewailing the calamity, respecting which they thought the Prophet was fabling, for no danger was yet apparent.

But in order, as I have said, to condemn the hardness of their hearts, he represents them in another character, as bewailing their ruinous condition, and saying, *We have left the land;* in which however they thought their dwelling would be perpetual; for they boasted that they could never be excluded, as it had been declared, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have chosen it." (Ps. cxxxii. 14.) As then God had testified that it would be a quiet habitation to his people, they thought that they were fortified by a triple wall and rampart, and that the city was altogether unassailable. But Jeremiah represents them as saying, that they had left their own land, that is, that they had been drawn and driven into exile. Then he adds, *because they have cast us out.* This seems to refer to their enemies who had cast them out, that is, pulled down their dwellings. Some take dwellings to be the nominative case to the verb, "Our dwellings have cast us out."[1] But the first meaning

[1] The true version is that given by *Blayney* and approved by *Horsley*,—
Because they have thrown down our habitations.
The ancient versions differ, but none give the meaning of our version,

reads better: I therefore consider the sense to be simply this,—that they were cast out and that their houses were destroyed by their enemies. It follows—

20. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation:

21. For death is come up into our windows, *and* is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, *and* the young men from the streets.

20. Itaque audite mulieres sermonem Jehovæ, et percipiant aures vestræ sermonem oris ejus, et docete filias vestras luctum, et unaquæque (mulier, *ad verbum*) sociam (*vel*, propinquam) suam planctum:

21. Quia ascendit mors in fenestras nostras, intravit in palatia nostra ad excidendum infantem è platea (è via publica) electos (*hoc est*, adolescentes, *etiam in flore ætatis et vigore*) in compitis.

He proceeds with the same subject, but adopts another figure. He then somewhat changes the comparison; for he had bidden them before to hire women to excite to mourning by fictitious tears, but he now addresses women in general; as though he had said, that such would be the mourning, that hired lamentations would not be sufficient, for the calamity would touch all hearts, and that mercenary wailing would not be real. *Hear*, he says, *ye women.*

Why he addresses women may be accounted for in two ways: the softness of women more easily leads them to weep; there may be also here an indirect condemnation of the men, that they were deaf and so hardened that no threatenings terrified them. But the first seems to be the most suitable reason here, provided we still understand that real mourning is opposed to feigned mourning. Then Jeremiah passes from the particular to the general; that is, after having spoken of hired women, he now includes all women; for lamentation would prevail in every city, and also in every house: *Hear* then, *ye women, the word of Jehovah.*

And he adds, *and let your ears receive the word of his mouth.* He mentions on the one hand the *mouth* of God,

which is that of *Junius* and *Tremelius*. The whole verse is in the past tense: things are represented as having already taken place:—

For the voice of wailing has been heard from Sion,—
"How have we been plundered! We have been put to great shame;
For we have left the land,
For they have thrown down our habitations."

The people are set forth as assembled in Jerusalem, having been made to quit the land, their dwellings having been pulled down.—*Ed.*

and on the other the *ears* of women. It seems indeed a redundancy, but the repetition is not superfluous. Had he said only, "Let your ears hear the word of his mouth," there would have been a redundancy; but he spoke before only of the word of God, and hear ye; now he adds, the *mouth* of God, and the *ears* of women. The Prophet no doubt intended to rebuke that hardness which we have often noticed. The word of God was deemed of no moment; hence he says, the *mouth* of God: as though he had said, "God speaks with you as it were from mouth to mouth: for though he employs my labour, I am yet but his instrument; so that you may easily find out that I declare nothing presumptuously, but faithfully deliver what I have received from him." We hence see how emphatical is this repetition, which may seem at first sight to be superfluous. The same emphasis belongs to the *ears* of women; it is as though he had said, that they had been hitherto extremely indifferent, and that it was time for their ears to be attentive.

He adds, *And teach your daughters;* as though he had said, that such would be the wailing, that it would reach not only the old and the middle-aged, but even young girls, as yet rude and ignorant. *And let every one,* he says, *teach her neighbour lamentation.* In short, the meaning is, that no women, old or young, would be exempt from this mourning, as all would be implicated in a common sorrow; for God's judgment would reach every age, sex, and order of men, and would also penetrate into every house.

And by way of explanation he adds, *For death has ascended into our windows.* There is here a kind of derision; for the Jews, as it has been said, had falsely promised to themselves a perpetual impunity; and therefore the Prophet adopts here a most suitable comparison. For as they sleep securely, who with closed doors seem to themselves to be beyond the reach of danger; so the Jews at that time despised God and all his judgments, as though the doors of their houses were closed. Hence the Prophet says, that *death* had entered in *through the windows;* and he thus derides their folly for thinking that they could escape the hand of God, because their gates were shut, as though God's power

could not ascend above the clouds nor enter through their windows, when the doors were closed. In short, he intimates that the doors would not be opened by God; for though he might not be disposed to break them, he could yet immediately ascend into the windows. We now apprehend the Prophet's design in saying, that *death* had entered through the *windows*.

And what he adds respecting *palaces* bears the same import; as though he had said, "Were our houses even fortified, and were they not only commodious habitations, but made like citadels, yet God could not be excluded; for his power can penetrate through the highest and the thickest walls, so that a palace is to him like the weakest and frailest cottage." We hence see that by this comparison he checks that foolish confidence by which the Jews had deceived themselves, and by which they were as yet inebriated. *Death* then *has ascended into our windows*, &c.

He then adds, *To cut off the young*, or children, *from the public ways, and the youths from the streets*.[1] By these words he sets forth the dreadfulness of the calamity; for the youths would not be able to defend themselves by their own strength; for by בחורים, *bechurim*, he means the most robust. Even these would not be able to repel the onset of their enemies; though in the flower of their age, yet their vigour, however strong, would not protect them, nor would children and in-

[1] The objection, that there is an inconsistency in saying that death entered through the windows to cut off children from the street, disappears, when we consider that the Jews thought themselves safe because their gates were closed and their city fortified. Be it so, says the Prophet, yet death will enter, if not through the gates, yet through the windows, and through our towers, and it will destroy the children who play in our streets, and our young men assembled in the squares and the wide places of our city. That those collected at Jerusalem are here meant, is evident from the nineteenth verse. Then, in the next verse, he refers to those who still continued in the country. And this accounts for the change made in the sentence, which has puzzled some expounders, and induced them to propose emendations. The verse may be thus rendered,—

For climbed has death through our windows,
It has come through our towers,
To cut off the child from the street,
The young men from the broad streets.

Though the gates were closed, yet death came in, not only through windows, or any openings there might have been, but also through strong towers.—*Ed.*

fants be spared. We see that two things are here set forth by the Prophet,—that the assaults of their enemies would be so violent, that young men would in vain resist them, as their vigour would avail them nothing,—and then that such would be the cruelty of their enemies, that no regard would be shewn for age, for they would put to death even infants newly born. It follows—

22. Speak, Thus saith the Lord, Even the carcases of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvest-man, and none shall gather *them*.

22. Loquere, Sic dicit Jehova, Cadet cadaver hominis, tanquam stercus in superficie agri, et tanquam manipulus à tergo messoris, et nemo colligens.

Though Jeremiah continues the same subject, he yet introduces a preface,—that he had been commanded to declare what he says here; for on account of the strangeness of the event, the prophecy seemed incredible. He might, indeed, have proceeded with the subject, and omitted the words, "Thus *saith Jehovah*," and have begun thus: "Fall shall the carcase of man," &c. But, as I have said, this prophecy seemed to the greatest part as worthless, as though it was a fable: it was therefore necessary to introduce these words,—that he came forth furnished with God's command; and he at the same time shews that he introduced nothing of his own, but that God himself spoke. We now perceive why these few words were introduced.[1]

He afterwards says, that the *carcases of men* would be cast forth *as dung*. He speaks by way of reproach, as though he had said, that all would without honour be laid prostrate

[1] *Blayney* and some others connect דבר with the former verse, and, on the authority of the *Septuagint*, leave out "thus saith Jehovah." The *Vulgate* and the *Targum* retain the text as we have it, and the *Syriac* omits only the first word; and there is no MS. in favour of what has been proposed; and the meaning, as here represented by *Calvin*, is so evident, that no change is at all necessary,—

22. Speak, Thus saith Jehovah,
Fall also shall the carcase of man,
Like dung on the face of the field,
Or like an handful of corn after the reaper,
And without any to gather *it*.

This would be the fate of such as remained in the country, whilst the greatest part had fled into Jerusalem. It is by keeping this distinction in view that the whole passage, from verse the seventeenth, may be rightly understood.—*Ed.*

by their enemies. And he adds a similitude, *They shall fall,* he says, *on the face of the field,* that is, everywhere through all the fields shall they fall *as dung,* which is cast forth, and which excites nausea by its sight and by its odour. Thus the Prophet here denotes fœtor and a deformed sight by the comparison of dung: yet we know with what pride were they then filled. This threatening then was to them very disagreeable; but as they flattered themselves in their vices, it was the more necessary to treat them roughly; for thus ought hypocrites to be dealt with, who indulge their own delusions: the more boldly they rise up against God, the more violently ought they to be cast down, so that they may at length humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

He adds another comparison, *As a handful,* &c. Jerome renders it "hay." If עמיר, *omid,* were found elsewhere in this sense, I would willingly adopt this meaning; but I rather think that it means those ears of corn which are not gathered while the reapers collect their handfuls. They do not, indeed, leave complete handfuls, nor cast them away; but it happens, through carelessness, that a few ears escape them. Then the Prophet says, that the Jews would be like those ears of corn which the reapers pass by and leave behind; and there is no one afterwards to gather them: and those ears of corn which thus remain in the field either rot of themselves, or are devoured by cattle or wild beasts. He then means, that there would be no residue of the people, for all, from the least to the greatest, would be given up to destruction.

This is the meaning; and at the same time he expresses contempt; for when reapers do not collect the whole produce of the field, there are still the poor, who gather the ears of corn; but when they are trodden under foot, and when there is no one to gather them, it betokens contempt; and this is what the Prophet intended to express. It now follows—

23. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches:

23. Sic dicit Jehova, Ne glorietur sapiens in sapientia sua, et ne glorietur fortis in fortitudine sua; ne glorietur dives in divitiis suis:

24. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the Lord.

24. Sed in hoc glorietur qui gloriatur cognoscendo et sciendo me, quòd ego sum Jehova, faciens misericordiam, (*vel*, clementiam) judicium et justitiam in terra; quia in his complacuit mihi, dicit Jehova.

This is a remarkable passage, and often found in the mouth of men, as other notable sentences, which are known as proverbial sayings: but yet few rightly consider how these words are connected with the previous context. Hence there are many who are satisfied with a simple explanation, as though it were a subject abruptly introduced, and as though the Prophet commenced something new; and they confine themselves to those words: and thus they misrepresent the meaning of the Prophet, or at least diminish much of the force of what is taught.

The Prophet no doubt has a regard to what has gone before. He saw, as I have often said, that he addressed the deaf; for the Jews were so swollen with false confidence, that the word of God was regarded worthless by them. As then some were proud for their riches, and others thought themselves more prudent than that they could by any means be taken, and others thought themselves so fortified by wealth and power, that they could easily resist any evil,—as then the minds of all were possessed with so much pride, the Prophet, in order to confirm what he had said, declares here that men foolishly gloried, while they set up their riches, or their strength, or their wisdom, in opposition to God; for all these things would vanish away like smoke.

We now then perceive why the Prophet forbids here any to glory except in God alone, and how the passage ought not to be deemed as abrupt, but connected with what he said, when he denounced destruction on the Jews, which yet they dreaded not, because they were filled with this ungodly and foolish conceit,—that they had more than a sufficient protection in their own strength, or riches, or wisdom. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou settest before our eyes so many evils and vices by which we have provoked thine anger against us, and yet givest us the hope of pardon if we repent,—O grant us a teachable spirit, that we may with becoming meekness attend to thy threatenings, and be in such a way terrified by them as not yet to despair of the mercy offered to us, but seek it through thy Son: and as he has once for all pacified thee by shedding his blood, so cleanse thou us also by thy Spirit from all our pollutions, until we at length stand immaculate before thee in that day when Christ shall appear for the salvation of all his people.—Amen.

Lecture Thirty-Eighth.

We began yesterday to explain what the Prophet means, when he forbids men to glory either in wisdom, or in strength, or in riches. The meaning is, that all are greatly deceived who think themselves blessed while alienated from God. We have also noticed the reason why he speaks of wisdom, strength, and riches, even this,—because it is a vice innate in all mortals to be proud of their own excellency. Whatever we think valuable ought to be acknowledged as received from God. If then all the excellency we have is God's gift, it is very strange that we do not learn humility when God thus binds us to himself; but that, on the contrary, we abuse his bounty by making it the occasion of pride. This ingratitude has nevertheless ever prevailed in the world. This then is the reason why the Prophet here reduces to nothing all the boastings of the world. There were among the Jews some rich, others excelled in wisdom, and others in power: thus it happened, that heavenly truth was of no value in their esteem. As then some trusted in their riches and not in God, and others in their wisdom, and others in their valour, the Prophet here declares that all the glory they arrogated on account of God's temporal gifts, was all nothing. It remained then for the Jews to consider, that all such confidences would avail nothing against God's judgment.

But we may hence learn a general truth; and Paul no doubt had a regard to this passage in 1 Cor. i. 31. He teaches us there, that God chooses what is foolish in the world, that he might thus shame the wisdom of the world, and that he chooses what is weak, that he might upset the strength of the world; and then he adds, That whosoever glories must glory in God alone. He doubtless took this passage from the Prophet; and yet he does not only speak there of strength of body, nor of riches, nor of worldly wisdom; but includes also righteousness, and whatever is deemed valuable or honourable among men. His object then is to annihilate every glory that belongs to the flesh, that the mercy of God alone may shine forth. Hence I said, that though the Prophet mentions only three things, yet a general doctrine may hence be suitably drawn; for what is said of wisdom, strength, and riches, may and ought to be applied to that false conceit of righteousness with which hypocrites swell. We shall now consider the words.

Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise glory, &c.[1] By way of concession he calls those wise who were without the fear of God, which yet we know is the beginning of wisdom. (Ps. cxi. 10; Prov. i. 7.) But the Prophet speaks according to the common opinion; and the meaning may be thus given, "Let not him who seems wise to himself glory in his own wisdom:" and so the other words may be understood. It is then added, *But let him who glories, glory in this*, &c. It appears from the second verse, that men are not so stripped of all glory, that they may lie down in disgrace; but that they may seek a better glory, for God delights not in the degradation of men. But as they arrogate to themselves more than what is right, and even inebriate themselves with delusions, he strips them naked, that after

[1] The next sentence is, "the valiant in his valour:" so the *Vulgate*; but by the *Septuagint*, "the strong (ἰσχυὸς) in his strength;" by the *Syriac*, "the giant in his strength." The *Targum* gives this paraphrase of the verse, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not Solomon, the wise son of David, delight in his wisdom; nor Sampson, the valiant son of Manoah, delight in his valour; nor Ahab, the rich son of Omri, delight in his riches." It is military valour that is probably meant. They thought that they had wisdom in counsel, valour in defence, and wealth to procure aid, or to carry on war.—*Ed.*

having known that all they think they have, either from nature, or from themselves, or from other creatures, is a mere phantom, they may seek true glory.

He afterwards adds, *In understanding and knowing me.* Though by these two words the Prophet means the same thing, yet they are not used without a design; for as men despised the knowledge of God, it was necessary to remind them, that to know God is the chief part of perfect wisdom. He therefore intended to correct the mischievous error under which almost the whole world labours; for while all attend to various pursuits, the knowledge of God is neglected. We see with what ardour every one pursues his own fancies, while hardly one in a hundred deigns to spend half an hour in the day in seeking the knowledge of God. And there is also another evil, a false opinion, which proceeds from pride, —that to know God is a common thing. We hence perceive why the Prophet has employed these two words to designate the same thing; it was to rouse more fully the attention of men; for he saw that almost all were torpid and indifferent on a subject which is justly entitled to the labour of a whole life; nay, were a hundred lives given us, this one thing would be sufficient to engage our attention. But, as it has been said, what ought to be preferred to all other things is despised and neglected.

He afterwards adds, *That I am Jehovah, who doeth judgment.* By calling himself Jehovah, he doubtless excludes all those devices which then engaged the attention of the Jews; for the whole land was corrupted by so many superstitions, that the name of the only true God was unknown. They all, indeed, professed to worship the God of Abraham, who had delivered to them his law by the hand of Moses; but as many errors were mingled with the true doctrine, God was deprived of his own honour. It was, then, God's will that he should be so known as to appear alone supreme, and to be alone as it were kept in view. But the explanation which follows ought to be carefully observed; for had he said only, "Let every one who glories, glory in the knowledge of me, that I am Jehovah," it would, indeed, have been a plain truth, but not sufficiently perspicuous or evident;

for the minds of men might have been in suspense, and they might have said, "What does this mean? or, why is it, that God regards the knowledge of himself to be so important?" They might also have supposed that it was quite enough to confess him to be the only true God. Hence God here reminds the Jews of his own divine perfections, that they might really know that he is God, and that they might not ascribe to him an empty name. It was for this reason that I have said, that these words, *who doeth mercy and judgment and justice*, ought to be carefully observed.

We see at this day, under the Papacy, that the name of God is presumptuously gloried in: there is no one who is not ready boldly to declare that he worships the one true God, and yet they profane his name; for they afterwards rob God, and bestow the spoils on the dead. This passage then teaches us, that the name of God of itself would be of no importance, if stripped of his power and perfections. Hence we have then only the true knowledge of God, when we not only acknowledge him to be the creator of the world, but when we also fully believe that the world is governed by him, and when we further understand the way in which he governs it, that is, by *doing mercy and judgment and justice.*

Now, the first thing respecting God is, that we should acknowledge him to be beneficent and bountiful; for what would become of us without the mercy of God? Therefore the true and right knowledge of God begins here, that is, when we know him to be merciful towards us. For what would it avail us to know that God is just, except we had a previous knowledge of his mercy and gratuitous goodness? We cannot know God without knowing ourselves. These two things are connected. Now, if any examines himself, what will he find but what will make him to despair? Thus, whenever God is thought of, we feel a dread, and despair in a manner swallows us up. In short, all avoid God, except the sweetness of his grace allures them. Why? Because, as I have said, there is nothing but what brings misery to us, and a cause of dread. Hence Jeremiah, while bidding men to glory in the knowledge of God, has not in vain given the first and the highest place to his mercy.

He afterwards adds, *Judgment and justice.* When these two words are joined together, they denote perfect government; that is, that God defends his faithful people, aids the miserable, and delivers them when unjustly oppressed; and also that he restrains the wicked, and suffers them not to injure the innocent at their pleasure. These then are the things which the Scripture everywhere means by the two words, judgment and justice. The justice of God is not to be taken according to what is commonly understood by it; and they speak incorrectly who represent God's justice as in opposition to his mercy: hence the common proverb, "I appeal from justice to mercy." The Scripture speaks otherwise; for *justice* is to be taken for that faithful protection of God, by which he defends and preserves his own people; and *judgment*, for the rigour which he exercises against the transgressors of his law.

But, as I have already said, judgment and justice, when found together, are to be taken for that legitimate government, by which God so regulates the affairs of the world, that there is nothing but what is just and right: and hence is confirmed more fully what I have already stated, that he not only speaks generally, but intends also to remove the evils which then stood in the way, and prevented the Jews from rightly receiving either promises or threatenings; for a false glory inebriated them all, inasmuch as one thought his riches to be like an invincible fortress; another, his wisdom; and the third, his strength. As then they were full of vain pride, and thus despised God and his heavenly truth, it was necessary to bring them to order, and even wholly to strip them, that they might know that they were not to glory in anything but in the knowledge of God.

Now, the knowledge mentioned here produces two fruits, even faith and fear; for if we are fully persuaded that there is propitiation with God, as it is said in Ps. cxxx. 4, we recumb on him, and hesitate not to flee to him, and to place our salvation in his hand. This is one thing. Then faith brings fear, as it is said in the psalm referred to, "There is propitiation with thee, that thou mayest be feared." But the Prophet here distinctly refers to these two things; for

God, by expressing his will to be known as being merciful, doubtless encourages us to exercise faith, so that we may call on him with tranquil minds, and not doubt but he is propitious to us; for he looks not on what we are, in order to repay to us what we deserve, but deals graciously with us according to his *mercy:* and by saying that he doeth *judgment* and *justice*, he intimates, that these two things ought to dispose and turn our hearts to fear and reverence. At the same time, when God declares that he doeth justice, he supplies us with a reason for confidence; for he thus promises to be the guardian of our salvation: for, as I have said, his justice is not to render to every one his just reward, but is to be extended further, and is to be taken for his faithfulness. As then God never forsakes his own people, but aids them in due time, and restrains the wicked, he is on this account called just: we hence can then more securely, and with quieter minds, recumb on him, when we know that his justice is such, that he will never leave us destitute of help whenever necessary.

He afterwards adds, *For in these I delight, saith Jehovah.* This refers to men; as though God had said, that he hated all who pass by the knowledge of his mercy, judgment, and justice, and become ferocious and elated with a vain hope on account of riches, or of strength, or of wisdom, according to what is said in Ps. cxlvii. 10, "The strength of a horse pleases not God, nor is he delighted with the legs of a man;" as though he had said, that God hates that confidence by which men presumptuously extol themselves, while they think their life and their safety to be in their own hand. So also, in this passage, there is a contrast to be understood between the knowledge of God's mercy, judgment, and justice, and the wisdom, strength, riches, and the foolish glorying, by which men are inflated, when they seek in these their happiness.[1]

[1] *Blayney* and *Venema* agree with *Calvin* in thinking that "these" refer to such men as knew God and trusted in him, and not to "these" things, the mercy, judgment, and justice before mentioned. The versions and the *Targum* are ambiguous, like the Hebrew, except the *Vulgate*, in which "these" is in the neuter gender, referring to things, and not to men. I would render the verse thus,—

We now also more clearly see what I have before said,—that not only condemned in these words is the boasting of human power, and the glorying in wisdom and in wealth, but that men are wholly stripped of all the confidence they place in themselves, or seek from the world, in order that the knowledge of God alone may be deemed enough for obtaining perfect happiness. For the Prophet shews, with sufficient clearness, that all men without God are miserable: it hence follows, that they are not otherwise happy but in him. Then the way and manner is to be added. How are we made happy in God? Even by knowing his mercy towards us, and then by delivering up ourselves to his defence and protection, and by suffering ourselves to be ruled by him, and by obeying also his law, because we fear his judgment. This passage might indeed be more fully handled; but it is enough for me, according to my custom, to point out the main things. It now follows—

25. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all *them which are* circumcised with the uncircumcised;

25. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, ut visitem (*ad verbum*, et visitabo) super omnem circumcisum in præputio.

26. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all

26. Super Egyptium (*vel*, super Egyptum; *tam de terra quàm de hominibus potest accipi*) et super Jehudah, et super Edom,

But in this let him glory who glories,
That he understands, and that he knows me,—
That I am Jehovah,
Who doeth mercy, judgment, and justice in the land;
For in these have I delighted, saith Jehovah.

"Me" is left out in the *Septuagint*, the *Syriac*, and the *Arabic*. "That he knows me" is only a more clear enunciation of the previous words, "that he understands:" what he understands or knows is then stated, "That I am," &c. "Judgment," when connected with justice, seems to refer to what the law forbids; and "justice," to what the law enjoins. See Is. lvi. 1, where the command is, to "keep" or observe "judgment," and to "do" or execute "justice." God doeth judgment in that he doeth nothing wrong, contrary to what is right and just; and he doeth justice in the defence of what is right and just, and in making good what he hath promised. Judgment regards the negative part of the law, and justice the active part. In chap. xxii. 3, we find both words, "judgment and justice," or righteousness. Then, as it is usual with the prophets, the last is described first, "delivered is the spoiled:" afterwards judgment is set forth, it does "no wrong," &c. But it is only when the two words occur together that they have these specific meanings; for both, occurring separately, have a much wider import. They are used together more than twenty times.—*Ed.*

that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart.

et super filios Amon, et super Moab, et super omnes finitos in angulo (*alii vertunt*, attonsos comam, *sed nulla ratio apparet*) habitantes in deserto; quia omnes gentes incircumcisæ (*vel*, præputiatæ) et tota domus Israel præputiati sunt corde (*vel*, incircumcisi.)

The Prophet, after having removed the obstacle which he saw hindered the Jews from reverently receiving the truth of God, now speaks more sharply, and performs the office of a herald in denouncing the vengeance which was at hand: *Behold*, he says, *come shall the days*, in which *I will visit all the uncircumcised in uncircumcision.*

This passage admits of two meanings. Some interpreters take as distinct these two words, מוּל, *mul*, the circumcised, and בערלה, *beorle*, in uncircumcision; as though Jeremiah had said, "I will visit the Jews, who are circumcised, as well as the heathen nations, who are uncircumcised." Others read them jointly,—that God threatens vengeance on the Jews and Gentiles, because they were circumcised, and still retained uncircumcision. The passage may however be thus suitably explained,—that there was a mixture, which corrupted the sacredness of circumcision, and made it like the uncircumcision of the Gentiles; as though it were thus expressed, "I will visit the circumcised with the uncircumcision," that is, promiscuously and without any difference, as we say in our language, *Pêle mêle.* For it follows afterwards, that *all were uncircumcised in heart;* that is, all the Jews. We hence see that the Prophet makes circumcision and uncircumcision the same, and that he intended to render profane the sacred symbol of adoption; but he had reference to the Jews, who, being degenerated, thus adulterated God's covenant, and at the same time violated circumcision, so that it differed nothing from uncircumcision. I therefore think, that the Jews are classed with the Gentiles, so that he ascribes even to them uncircumcision: *I will* then *visit all the circumcised with the uncircumcision;* that is, the circumcision of each is vain, and is like uncircumcision.

However this may be, the Prophet here denounces ruin, not only on the Jews, but also on the Egyptians and on other neighbouring nations; but he yet speaks to his own people,

for his word was not destined for the Egyptians, nor for the Idumeans and the Moabites. But as the Jews were wont to have recourse to the Egyptians, when any danger arose from the Assyrians and Chaldeans, the Prophet here connects the Egyptians with the Jews, and for the same reason, the other nations. We indeed know that the Idumeans and the Moabites were most hostile enemies to the Jews; but as the state of things changed, they were at one time their enemies, at another their friends; and when they saw that the Chaldeans extended their power, they saw also that they were exposed to plunder, and hence it happened that they willingly helped the Jews. Since then the Jews hoped that their neighbours on every side would aid them, the Prophet says that a visitation was nigh them all: and hence is confirmed what I have already said; for he distinguishes not the Jews from the Egyptians and other nations; but, on the contrary, as they had made alliances with them, he intends to unite them in one body: I *will visit*, he says, *the circumcised with the uncircumcision*. For the Jews did not bear in mind that God was the protector of their safety, and that they had been set apart by him from other nations. He names the circumcised together with the uncircumcision, because the Egyptians, the Idumeans, the Ammonites, and the Moabites, were deemed circumcised on account of the covenant they had made with the Jews; and the Jews were deemed uncircumcised, because they had forsaken God, and thus profaned themselves.

It is indeed true that the Idumeans were circumcised, for they were the descendants of Esau, and had no doubt retained this external symbol; but their circumcision was altogether a mockery, as Esau had departed from the Church of God. The circumcision of the elect people was in itself efficacious; but as they had alike fallen into superstitions, they were like the uncircumcised, according to what Paul says,—that the letter of the circumcision, that is, the external rite, was nothing. We hence see that there is no common propriety in the Prophet's words, when he denounces vengeance on the Jews as well as on the Egyptians, and names the circumcised with the uncircumcision; for the latter had uncircumcision, the former circumcision, and thus they had

blended profane and sacred things together, so that there was nothing pure or uncorrupted: and hence he mentions *Egypt*, *Judah*, *Edom*, the *children of Ammon*, and *Moab*. We have before stated why he enumerated all these nations; he did so, because they expected help from one another, so that they all despised God.

He afterwards adds, *And all the extreme ones in a corner*. The word קֵץ, *kots*, means the end; hence they take קְצוּצִים, *kotsutsim*, here for extremities: and פְּאָה, *pae*, signifies a corner, and an end. We might then, if propriety of language would bear it, render the words thus, "the cornered in the corner." But the meaning is by no means ambiguous, which is,—that though the Moabites and others had hidden recesses, they could not be exempt from the calamity. God's vengeance shall come, says Jeremiah, into their farthest corners, where they think that they dwell in safety. And what follows is explanatory, *the inhabitants of the wilderness*, or, those who dwell in the wilderness. He thus shews what he meant by קְצוּצֵי פְּאָה, *kotsutsi pae*, the extremities of the corner. For when people inhabit remote places, they regard themselves on that account safer, being secure in their hiding-places: this confidence the Prophet derides; and he says that punishment would reach them also.[1]

[1] The exposition of the phrase given in this section is inconsistent with all the ancient versions and the *Targum*: it is what has been given by modern rabbins. "The shaven around the face," is the *Septuagint*; "the shaven as to the hair," the *Vulgate* and the *Targum*; and to the same purpose is the *Syriac* and *Arabic*. The word פְּאָה is used in Lev. xix. 27, with distinct reference to the *side* or *corner* of the head, and of the beard; and the Israelites were forbidden to imitate the nations who shaved off those parts. *Parkhurst* renders the phrase (which occurs also in chap. xxv. 23, and in chap. xlix. 32) "trimmed on the sides," that is, of the head; more literally, "the shaven on the side," that is, of the head, or, "on the corner," that is, of the beard. It was a phrase, though defective, yet no doubt well understood, as it is the case in other languages. The design of mentioning these seems to have been to class together such as had been expressly separated. I propose the following as the version of the two verses,—

25. Behold the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
That I will visit every one circumcised,
Who is in uncircumcision,—
26. The Egyptians and Judah,
Edom also and the children of Ammon and Moab,
And all the shaven on the side *of the head*,
Who dwell in the desert;
For all these nations *are* uncircumcised;

He then adds, *For all the nations are uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.* By saying, that *all nations* were uncircumcised, he doubtless includes the Israelites, and thus by way of reproach he takes away from the chosen people their peculiar distinction; as though he had said, that Israel was so mixed with the nations, that they only made a part of them: the Jews would have otherwise denied, that they deserved to be classed with the Gentiles; but the Prophet deprives them of every excuse, and says that they were but one nation, having no difference: *All these nations* then *are uncircumcised.* And so ה, *He*, before גוים, *guim*, nations, may be taken as a demonstrative pronoun, and not a relative, "All these nations." He had spoken not only of the Egyptians and the Idumeans and of other neighbouring nations, but had also mentioned Judah. He then says, "All these nations are uncircumcised:" and as I have already said, he condemns Israel, because they differed nothing from the nations, though God had consecrated them to himself; for there was an entire mingling, which made them all equal.

But as some objection might still be alleged, he says, the Jews are *uncircumcised in heart.* He had indeed already included them in the nations; but it was necessary to insist more on this point, for circumcision might have been pleaded by them. Hence the Prophet says, that though they had the visible symbol in the flesh, they were yet uncircumcised in heart, and ought therefore to be classed with the nations. We see how sharply he reproves them: though he separates them from other nations, he yet shews that they justly deserved to be numbered with them; for God cares not for the external symbol, but regards the chief thing, the circumcision of the heart.

It is a common thing with Moses and the Prophets to call an unrenewed heart, uncircumcision, and to say that the people are uncircumcised in heart: for circumcision, while

> And all the house of Israel,—
> *They are* uncircumcised in heart.

It is justly remarked by *Horsley* that the nations here mentioned practised circumcision. They were hence circumcised, and yet in uncircumcision; and the Jews were like them: and the last line explains this apparent contradiction: they had the outward but not the inward circumcision. —*Ed.*

an evidence of free salvation in Christ, at the same time initiated the Jews into the worship and service of God, and proved the necessity of a new life; it was in short a sign both of repentance and of faith. When, therefore, the Jews presented only the sign, they were justly derided by Moses and the prophets; for they seemed as though they sought to pacify God by a thing of nought, without regarding the end. The same is the case now when we boast of baptism alone, and are at the same time destitute of repentance and faith: our boasting is absurd and ridiculous. And hence Paul calls the external rite, when the sign is separated from its reality and substance, the letter of the circumcision; and on the other hand he calls that the true circumcision, which is in secret and in the spirit. We may also say the same of baptism,—that the literal baptism avails hypocrites nothing, for they receive only the naked sign: and therefore we must come to the spirit of baptism, to the thing itself; for the interior power is renovation, when our old man is crucified in us, and when we rise again with Christ into newness of life.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast revealed to us in thy Gospel how guilty and miserable we are, we may learn to loathe ourselves, and so lie down confounded and despairing on account of the sins and guilt we have contracted, as yet to know that true glory is offered to us, and that we can be made partakers of it, if by true faith we embrace thy only-begotten Son, in whom is offered to us perfect righteousness and salvation: And grant also that we may so cleave to Christ, and so receive by faith his blessings, that we may be able, not only before the world, but also against Satan and death itself, to glory in thee, that thou alone art just and wise and strong; and may thy strength and justice and wisdom shine forth upon us in our iniquity and ignorance and infirmity, until we shall at length reach that fulness of glory, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord,—Amen.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

ERRATA.

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Page	Line			
xx, . .	9,	repeat . .	*ought to be*	reject.
86, . .	37,	affects . .		afflicts.
101, . .	33,	has been . .		would be.
114, . .	8,	exercising . .		excusing.
122, (note)	9,	particle . .		participle.
199, . .	28,	shew . .		shun.
224, . .	22,	would have . .		would have been.
297, . .	22,	the obstinacy . .		their obstinacy.
316, (note)	25,	house . .		home.
344, (note)	13,	even . .		ever.
384, . .	12,	raise up a prayer to . .		cast a prayer before.
384, . .	16,	lift up a prayer to . .		cast a prayer before.
387, (note)	17,	these the first . .		then the first.